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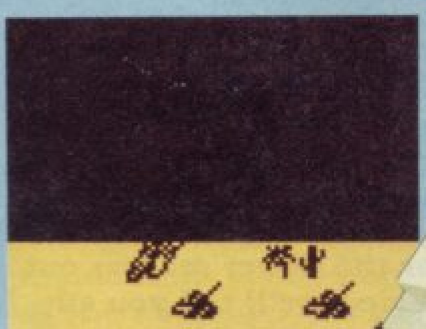
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SOFTWARE











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MEGATAPE
27> 4

Zounds! Methinks we've gone bonkers! Verily, three codings of the finest quality inhabit the magical magnetic media. Captain Pytron and Fox Fights Back - full price, full colour action. And an exclusive graphics suite for the SAM Coupe. Zoinks!

WIN £500 CASH!> 30



Yes. Yours for the winning. 500 earth spondos, to spend as you wish. And it's hardly difficult to enter. So get to it.



SAM EXCLUSIVE> 32

Learn from Simon Goodwin, our SAM guru, how he squeezes more out of the Coupe than anyone thought possible.

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More hilarity with everyone's favourite subterrainian star, Sir Montworth of Molington.





CHECK OUT
> 64

Black Adder, Piano Phones, A book by Captain Kirk and a huge military helicopter. All on two pages!



REGULARS

CONNECT

Our very own Bit in the Middle. Pull it out and make it work!

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MEGA 27 TAPE



CAPTAIN PYTRON

Guess what? We've got a new friend and they are called New Breed Developments. And guess what else? They've made up a game just for us and nobody else, so there. It's called Captain Pytron and it's jolly good fun, I can tell ya.

The game's set on a planet called Delta 4. It's your job to take Captain Pytron out of the prison where he's being held and guide him to an awaiting shuttle. Easy or wot? No, in fact, it's not easy at all because between the prison and the shuttle you and Captain Pytron have to duff up loads of beastie baddies thingies before they can duff you.



There are lots of bits and pieces to be picked up along the way to help you, like explosives, passes and batteries which other objects work. When you come across an object you can access the object menu which has four icons on it - 1.Use object, 2.Drop object, 3.Hold object (only used with items which need batteries) and 4.Exit menu, by pressing the SPACE bar.

Some objects need batteries to make them work. To insert them into an object you have to put the object in your hand (by selecting the hold icon).

You can use a joystick with this game or the keyboard. Key controls are A - up, Z - down, K - left, L - right and M - fire, so now you know.

FOXX FIGHTS BACK

You lucky lucky people! Just look what we've managed to snaffle for Megatape 27, this month. We've got Foxx Fights Back, and you know what a great game it is (only the best for our luverly wuverly readers).

Foxx was reviewed back in our September 1988 issue and it got a whumping great 75% from Jimbo Douglas. For the newer readers out there who missed the review we'll tell you all about Foxxy.

Well, it's animal madness a-go go, as far as I can see. Poor old Foxx is happily lolling around in his burrow when whinging old Mrs Foxx demands that he nips out to find her some grub pronto. So out he hops to collect some apples off the nearest tree (because Foxes really like apples don't they?!?).

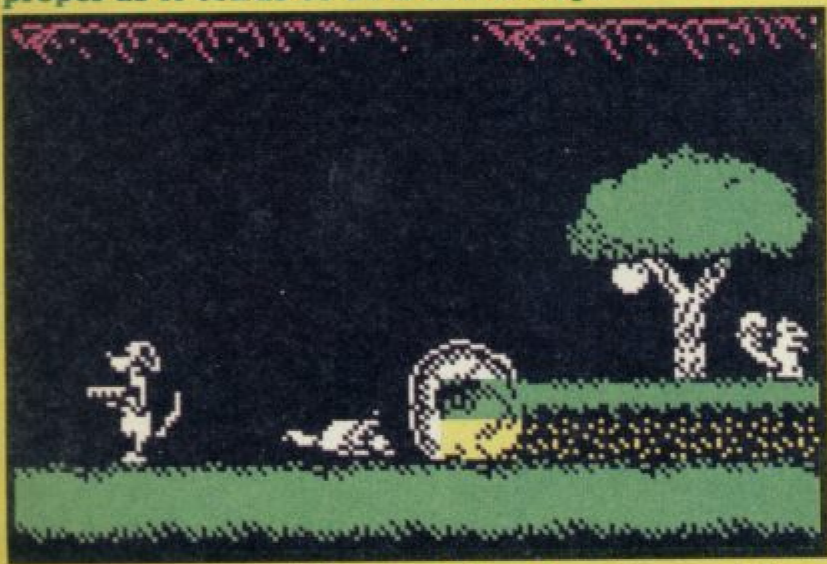
If this all sounds a wee bit bland, you'd be mistaken. Whilst attempting to nab the nearest Granny Smith, Foxx has to get passed loads of Wild Life On One extras. These turn up in the shape of a Scrambler-riding beagle, grenade-



launching squirrels and badgers and manic birds who drop bombs from the sky.

To defend yourself from all these loony creatures your best bet is to pick up the weapons that are scattered about here and there. At the bottom of the screen you have a Pantometer which shows Foxx with his tongue hanging out. The longer his tongue gets the less energy you have. This can be remedied by doing a bit of apple munching to build up your strength. Eating loads of apples also helps you progress on to the next level. Another way to boost your energy is to go careering down the first rabbit warren and eat every bunny in sight (mad or wot?).

As you run about the parallax scrolling landscape (cooo) you'll come across the odd river and lake which you have to jump across. Now, we must warn you, it's a good idea to practice your jumping skills before you start the game proper as it tends to be a tad tricky.



We think Foxx Fights Back is a fun game with plenty of levels, great animation and loads of violent bits. Watch out for the low flying chickens!

HINTS AND TIPS

Whatever you do, keep on jumping. Baddies can be avoided if you leap over them.

Jumping the stream is pretty tricky, so we suggest you get in some jumpy practice beforehand. Nudge yourself right to the very edge of the stream first, then jump.

Of all the weapons, nab the bigger ones to blast the baddies away.

If a chicken should fly by, jump up and catch him in your teeth for bonus points.

When your Pant-o-Meter reaches danger level, jump down a rabbit hole and get munching.

Beware of the motorbike beagles. If they disappear off the left hand side of the screen they come straight back, minus the bike but totting a big gun.

THE NEW SAM GRAPHICS MODES!!!

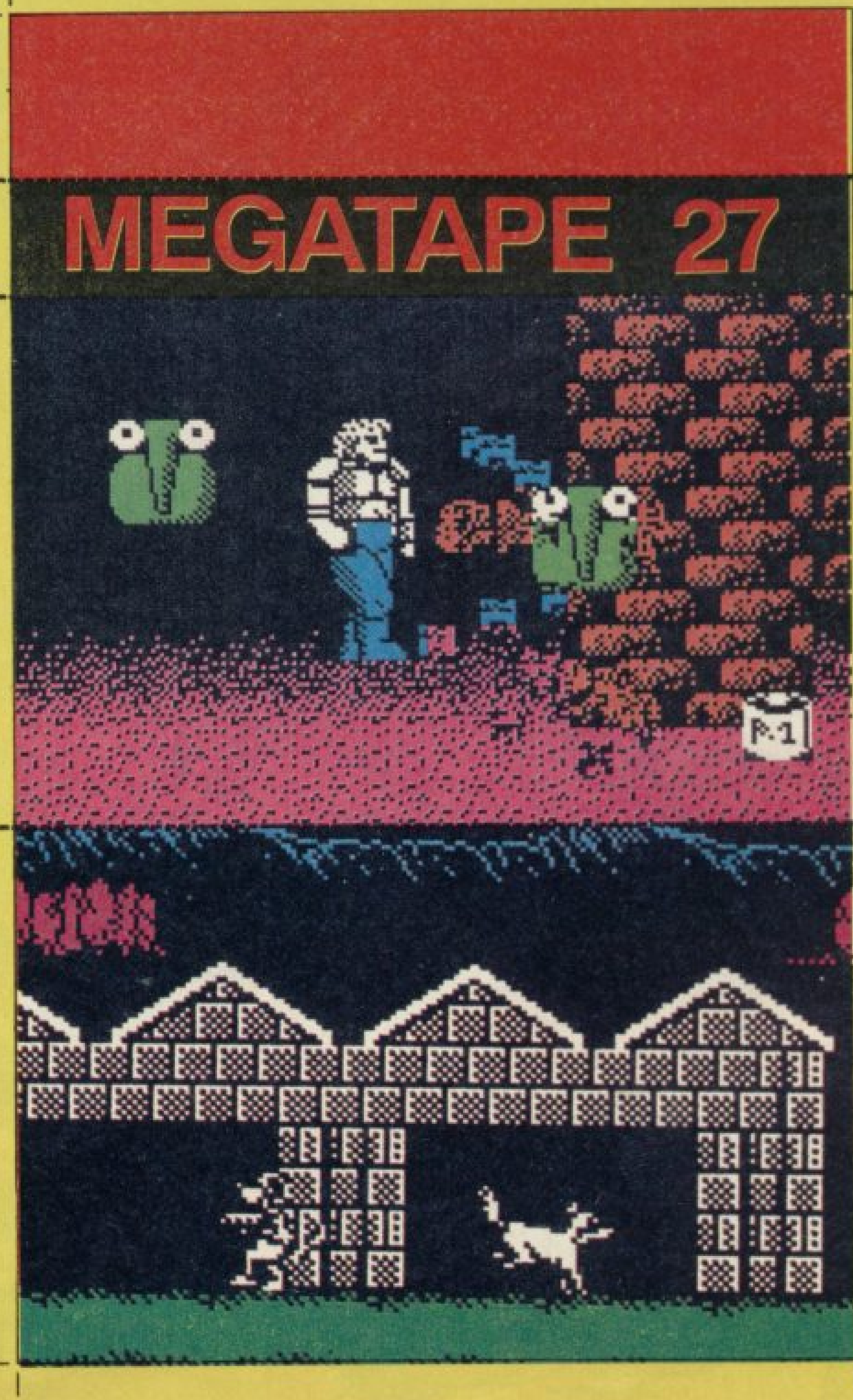
The last three files on your megatape are neat graphic demonstrations for the SAM Coupe, written for us by the neat and demonstrating Simon N Goodwin. You can load these demos onto any Coupe using the normal LOAD "" command but, naturally enough, THEY WON'T LOAD INTO A SPECTRUM!! So if you try to anyway, then you're a complete cream and jelly brain. In fact, you're probably a trifle stupid.

Anyway, the SAM demos remix the Coup's standard graphic modes to give a maximum of 196,608 pixels on screen (512 x 384) or a palette of 8,256 colours! LOAD "MODE 3+3" to see the top resolution, or LOAD "MODE 4*4" for the multi-coloured display. Type RUN to see the main demo, and LIST will allow you to look through all the loverly code. (Simon's too modest to tell you that his code is very well structured so I won't say anything about it!)

You might find it worthwhile to adjust the colour, brightness and contrast of your screen for best results. The programs work on any display although results may vary. The demos were tested on 256K and 512K Coups running ROM 10 and ROM 12.

MODE 3+3 includes routines in SAM BASIC and Z80B machine code (FLIP1 and FLIP2), plus notes on the machine code. MODE 4*4 has a sort routine plus LUMTAB and COLTAB procedures which display or print tables that help when choosing new colours for your own hi-res experiments. SHOW 128 displays the standard SAM palette of 128 colours.

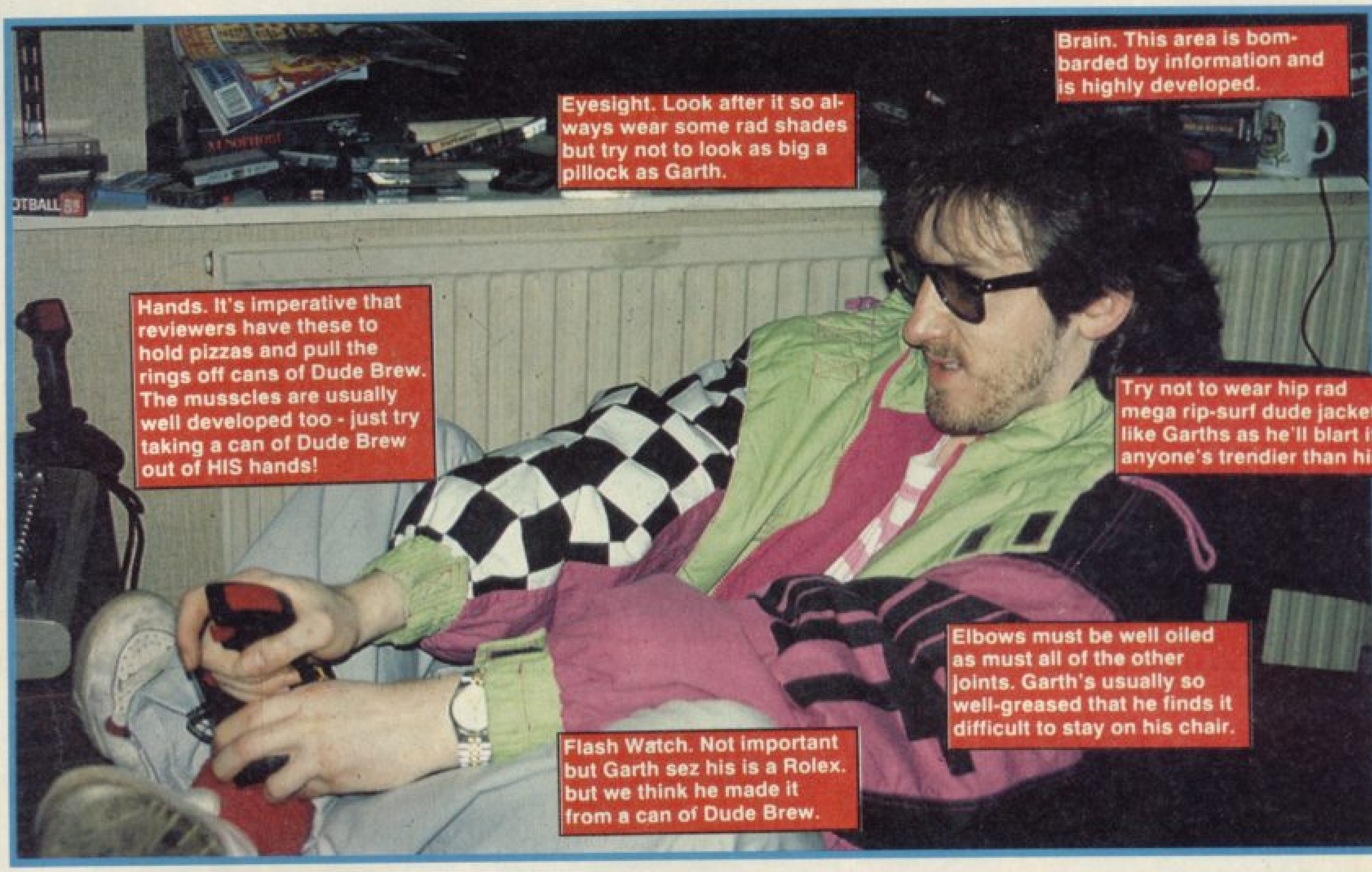
The last file, MODE 916, uses a mixture of screen swapping and PALETTE interrupts to show 916 colours from the 8256 possible, on the screen! Type ESC then palette to restore the default colours.





Pipe Mania!!
ADDICTION BEYOND BELIEF!!
C and VG Feb 1990 94%
Pipe Mania is "a classic puzzle arcade game that is so addictive, it should come with a Government Health Warning!"
Pipe Mania is a game of great ingenuity, simple in concept and friendishly challenging to play.
You'll need to act instinctively, but think strategically!
One wrong move, one brief hesitation or mis-placed pipe section, and you'll drown in a sea of slime!
ST Action
"Pipe Mania is a conceptually simple and cheeky game which is incredibly addictive"
Commodore User Screenstar
"Terrifically addictive... outlasts any arcade conversion"
AVAILABLE FOR
Commodore Amiga
IBM PC and Compatibles
Atari ST
Commodore 64 Cassette
Commodore 64 Disk
Spectrum Cassette
Spectrum Disk
Amstrad CPC Cassette
Amstrad CPC Disk
MSX
BBC Electron Cassette
BBC Disk
Apple Macintosh
Archimedes
Zero March 1990 92%
"Buy this game and you may never sleep again"
The Games Machine Star Player Award 83%
"A puzzle game of great ingenuity and addictivity, Pipe Mania is simple in concept, fiendishly challenging in play, and attractive to look at"
Zzap Sizzler
"Absolutely guaranteed to drive you round the bend"
Amiga Computing Excellence Award 95%
"A game with a game play that shines"
Game Players Award USA
"Best PC strategy game of 1989"
C+VG HIT!
AMIGA FORMAT GOLD
THE One FOR 16-BIT GAMES
ATARI ST AMIGA PC
machine STAR PLAYER
ZERO
GAME Players GAME OF THE YEAR
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THE SCORES ON THE DOORS...



SCORES

SU Reviews: The WHY, WHERE & HOW

Our overall scores are NOTHING TO DO with the marks for Graphics, Sound, Playability or Lastability. The overall gives you the reviewer's view of whether you should dive into your pockets and buy a game or not.Check out the overall scores below to see what we're really saying with an overall mark.

0 - 9% It's a zero, a complete and utter void of a game that's not worth the tape it's on.

10 - 19% Heavily poor. Don't even spend someone else's money on this.

20 - 29% There's something there but we're just not too sure what it is.

30 - 39% There's game here but it's a bit of a stinker. Buy it and regret it!

40 - 49% Okay as long as you don't expect your games to be racey, pacey, clear or collectable.

50 - 59% Now we're getting somewhere. A game that's above average but not an essential buy.

60 - 69%
It's a game that suffers from a deficientcy in some area(s) but has large potential.

70 - 79%
The big boys' league. This software's hot but you couldn't fry an egg on it.

80 - 89%
A real sizzler. You should be able to buy these games with no regrets.

90 - 99% A real wicked rip snorter and not to be missed! Wear asbestos gloves when you play!

100% No-one gets 100% There isn't a gamc out that couldn't be improved upon. (Oh yeah?) Yeah!

ICONS

SCORES

75 | 59 | 79 | 78 — OVERALL 82%

Okay, okay. So it's a bit like Tetris, but it's still great fun!

Label: Domark
Price: £8.95

CHRIS JENKINS

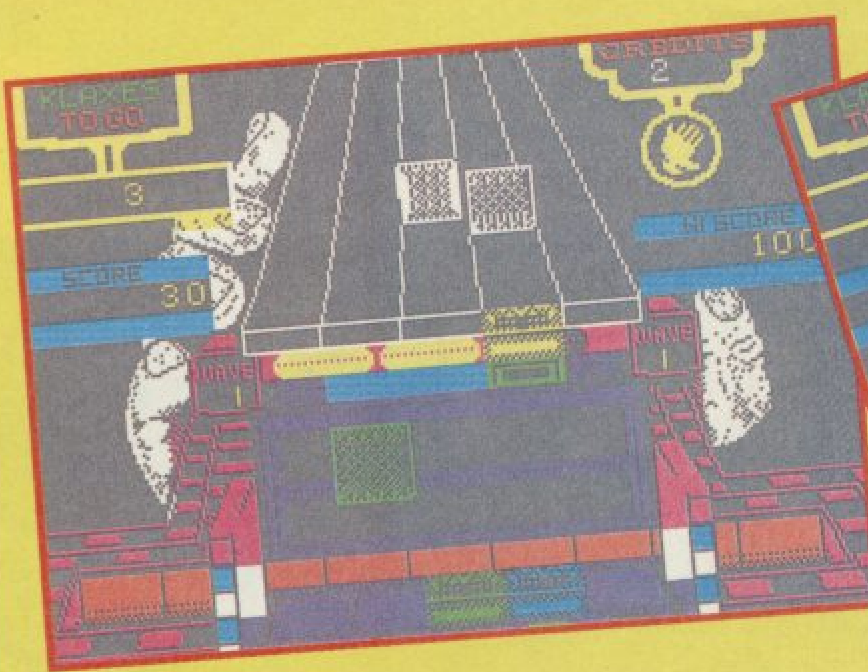
Playability
How well the controls are thought out and how easy they are to use and how progressive the game is.

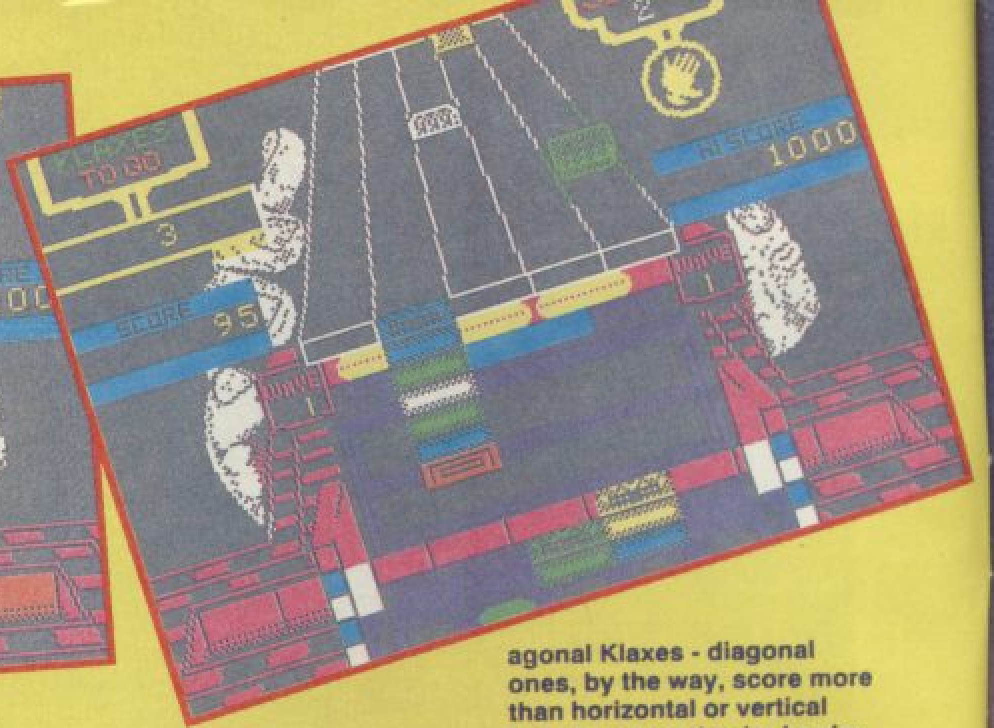
Graphics
How good are the graphics? This includes the movement, use of colour, clarity and overall artistic impression.

Sound
This is not just awarded for the most sound effects\sampling but is how well the sound adds to the atmosphere of the game.

Lastability
A high mark sh[illegible] a game has depth and addictiveness meaning that you'll just keep going back for more.

KLAX



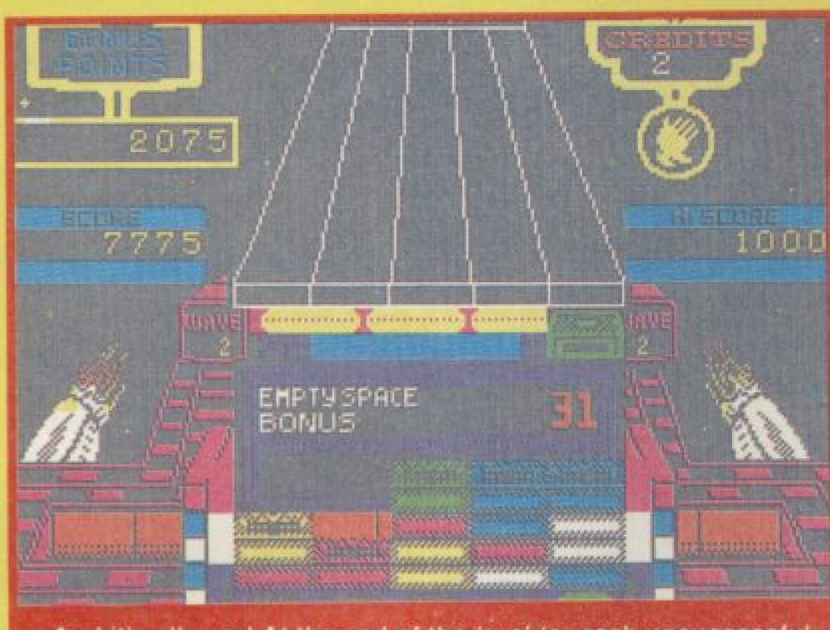


It happens everywhere... films, books, clothes, music, and even computer games. When someone comes up with a successful idea, everyone else rips it off. Never mind! So long as the punters enjoy the results, does it eally matter that Klax is a thinly-disguised imitation of Tetris? I don't think so, M. Poirot.

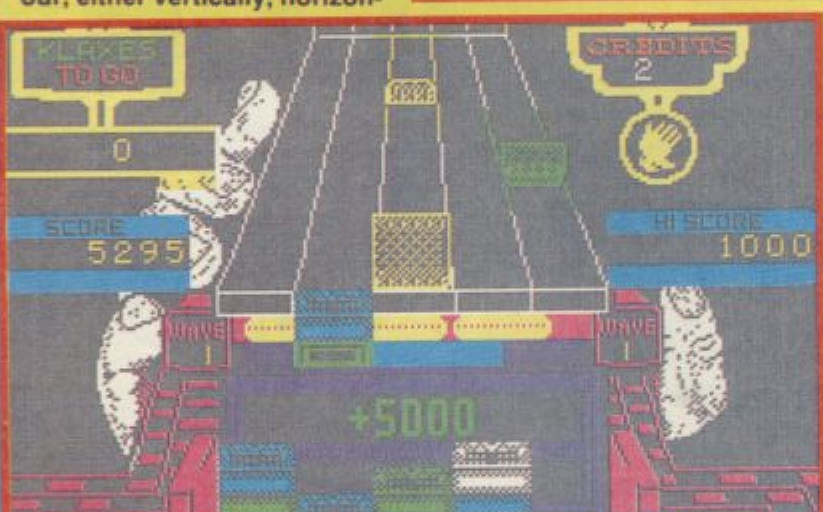
The concept, as marketing people like to call it, is simple. Different coloured tiles approach you, not tumbling through the air, but along a rolling conveyor belt. Your task is to move your catcher left and right, catch the tiles and flip them into one of five bins, in order to create Klaxes. A Klax is a row of three tiles of the same colour, either vertically, horizontally or diagonally. Once a Klax is made, the tiles disappear, and those above them tumble down. If you're very clever (or lucky) this will create further Klaxes, and the chain reaction will score you many tens of points, as Patrick Moore would say. But if the drop meter shows that youhave missed more tiles than you are allowed, or if your bins fill up - each one can hold up to five tiles - you're finished, laddie.

But it can't be that simple, you cry! No, it ain't. For a start there are Wild Tiles which change colour as they move, and can become part of more than one Klax of different colours, so they're worth a bundle. Then there's the Speed-up option which allows you to make the conveoyor belt run faster, and the Throw Option which lets you fling a tile back onto the belt.

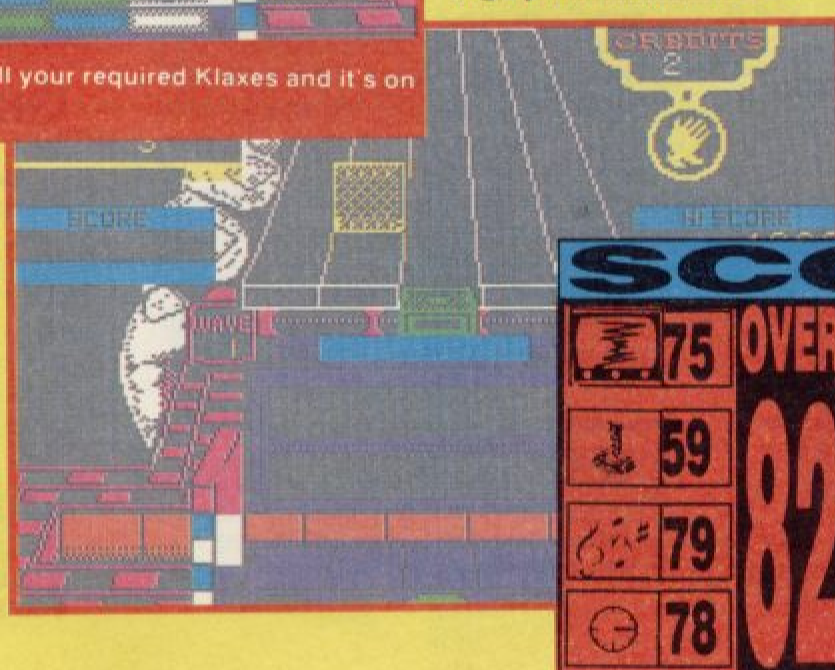
The game is divided into Waves, and each Wave has its own rules; for instance, insisting that you survive a certain number of tiles, or getting a particular number of diagonal Klaxes - diagonal ones, by the way, score more than horizontal or vertical ones because they're harder to get.



And it's all over! At the end of the level (or each unsuccessful attempt) your extras are totalled.



Level complete! You've got all your required Klaxes and it's on to the next sheet.



SCORES

Graphics	75
Playability	59
Sound	79
Lastability	78

OVERALL 82%

Okay, okay. So it's a bit like Tetris, but it's still great fun!

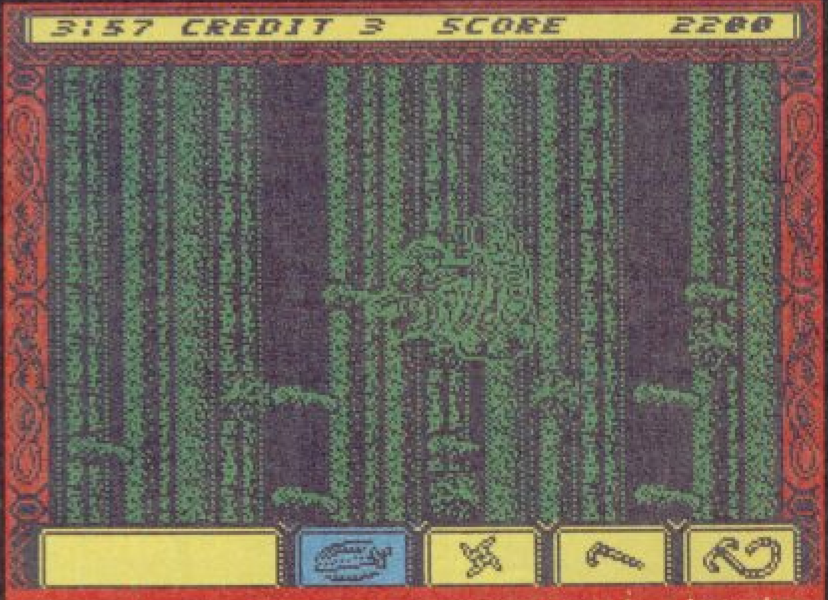
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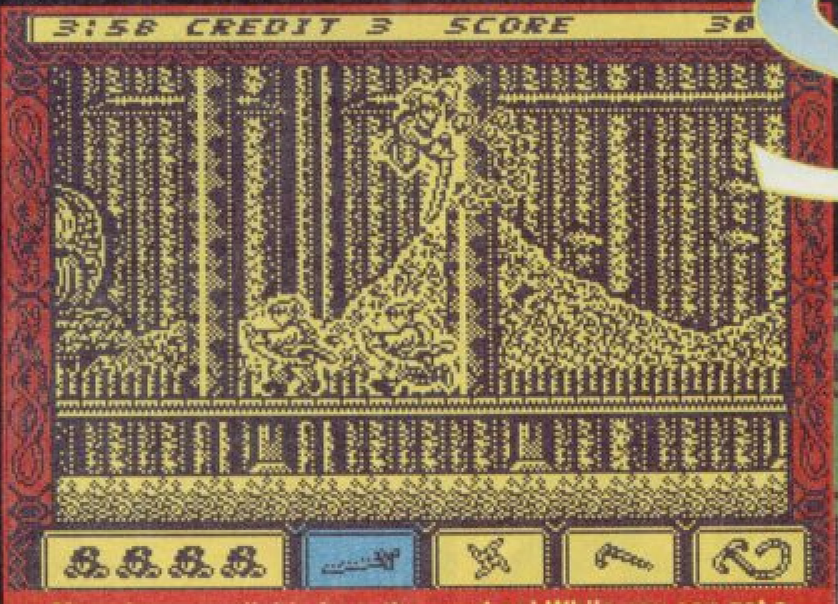

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NIN

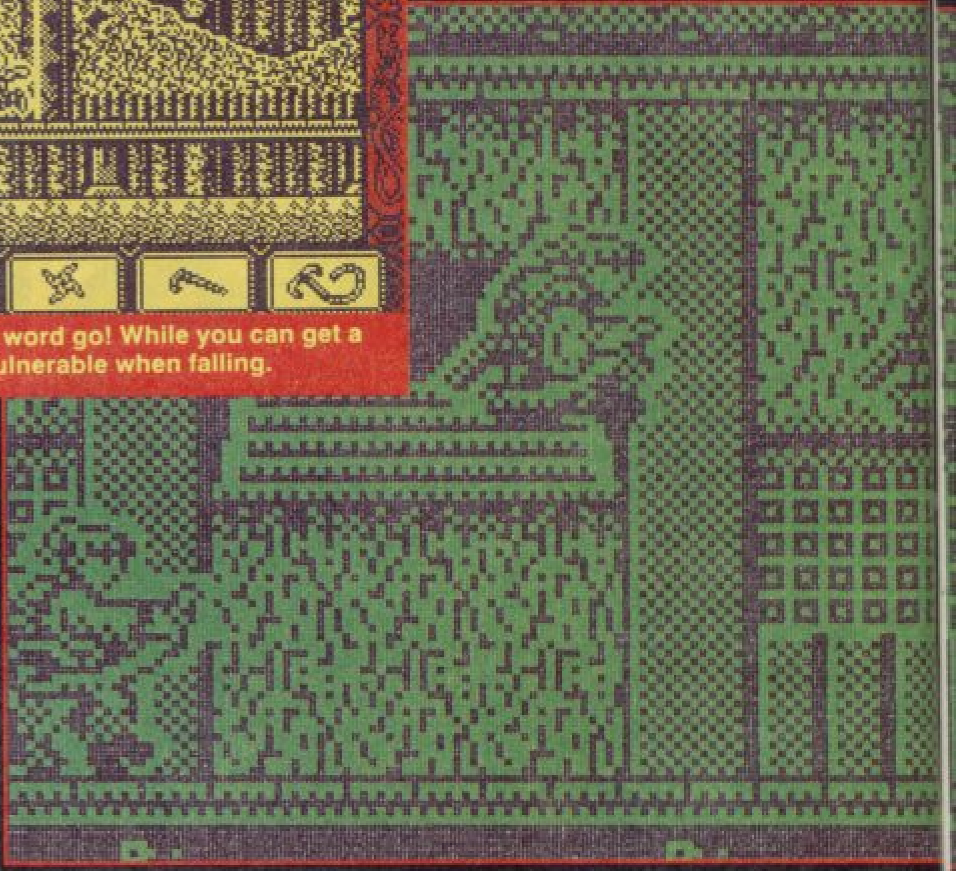
SPI



Wallop! A powered-up sword offers good cover from incoming missiles.



Mega leaps available from the word go! While you can get a good downward angle, you're vulnerable when falling.



There are only two things wrong with Ninja Spirit; the graphics and the playability. Har har.

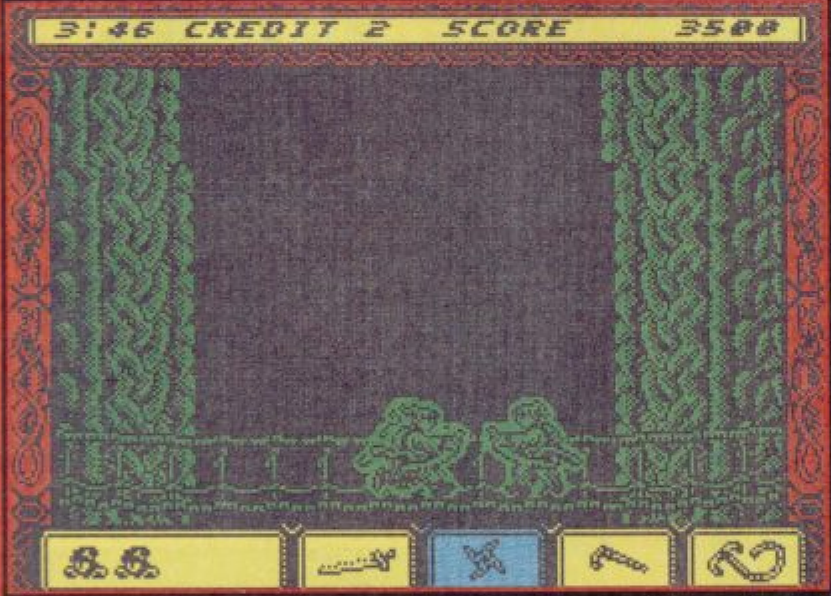
Well, although this seems a little harsh, it's not really a million miles from the truth. Ninja Spirit is an excellent martial arts program, but there are a couple points which, if tweaked a little, could be greatly improved.

For a start, the backdrops on most levels are so complicated (and indeed pretty) that it's quite impossible to spot incoming objects. Since you don't have an energy level, one hit from any object will kill you outright. This is even more of a pain when your next life starts a couple of screens back from your last position.

Levels with complex backgrounds therefore take much longer to complete than those (few) where you can see where you're going. Not fair.

Level 1 is set in a temple of sorts. All alone, you've got to hack (sword), swing (grappling hook derivative), chuck (shiruken) and, er, chuck (little hammers) your way through the temple from the left most point to the right. Even at this early stage, the bad guys come thick and fast. As well as the frenzied gangs which run on from the sides of the screens, there are little blighters hanging from the rafters firing hammers at you.

It becomes rapidly apparent that the only weapon worth having is (are) the shiruken. Since any contact with the enemy results in death, you'd have to be braver (madder) than most to try your luck with the sword. The grappling-hook scythe is largely ineffectual except for use on solitary foes. And the little hammers are simply useless.

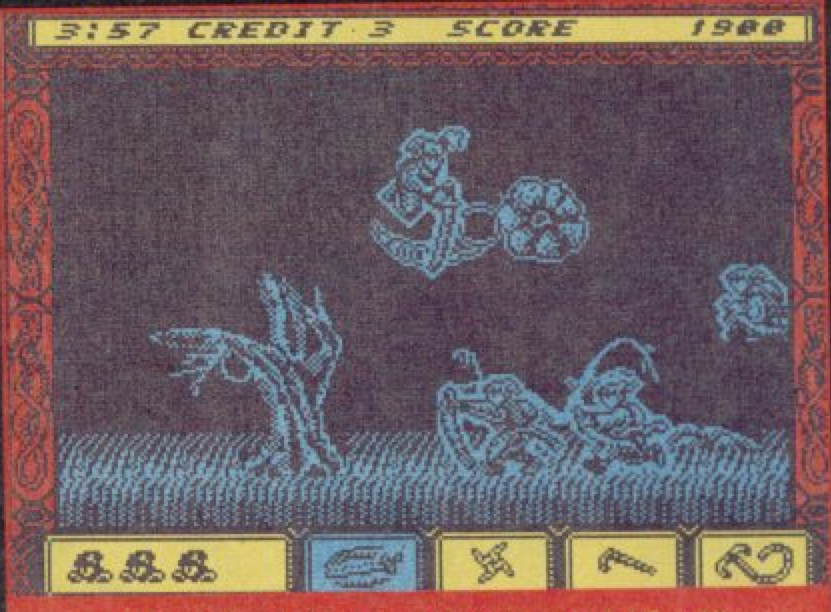


Even when you've got to grips with the slightly inefficient fire method - hold down fire and push in the appropriate direction; ie you can't fire while running - the sheer number of enemy soldiers is overwhelming.

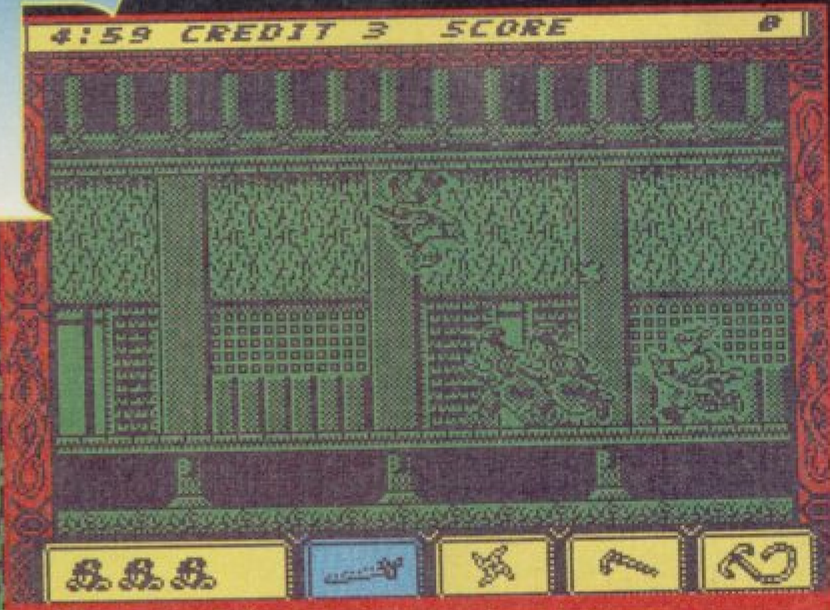
Fortunate, then, that specific soldiers when killed leave behind floating bubbles with miraculous powers. Some multiply the power of your current weapon; for example giving you a whooshy sword or three-directional shiruken fire. Others,



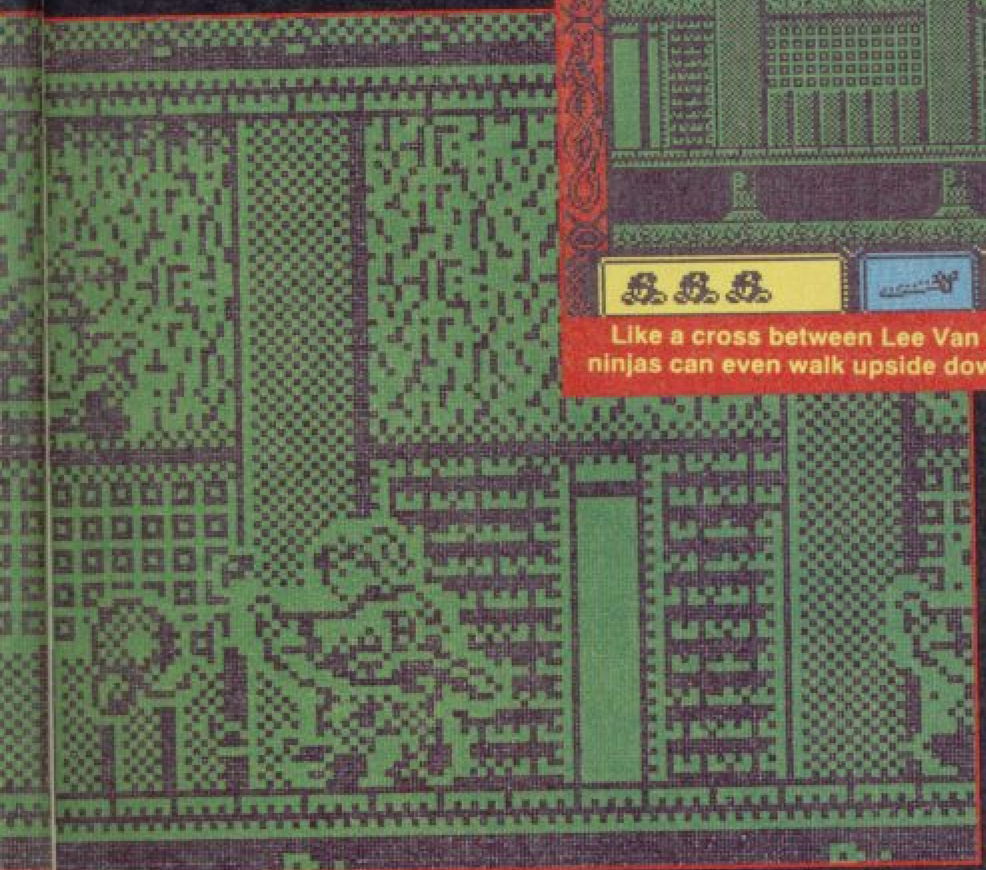
NJA
IRIT



Poof! Three lives left and onto level 3 already! One Kiteman down and another hundred to go.



Like a cross between Lee Van Cleef and Spiderman, the top ninjas can even walk upside down.





though bring to life - ta daa! - the Ninja Spirit.

The Spirit is a damned handy fellow. He has an armoury equal to yours, is impervious to attack and follows your every move at an appropriate distance.

Alas, you lose all your power-ups and Mr Spirit each time you get killed.

Level 2 takes place in dense forest. It's a bit of a nothingy level, to tell the truth. More men up trees firing diagonally at you, and platforms to jump on. The end of this level pits you against what looks like a big ape flying around on a crossbow. A few shots, though, and he's done for.

Level 3 is where life begins to get really tough. Out on the wastelands of blasted trees and debris, you're assaulted by the usual baddies and a new breed of scumbag. These ones have horrible pointy hats and whopping blunderbus guns. And they shoot you in the back, the yellow bellied swine.

Level 4 and it's back indoors for a punch up in what looks like a tavern. This time, your ninja abilities have warmed up enough to let you walk on the ceiling. From here you can work a zig-zag formation, spraying shiruken and covering most horizontal angles.

Possibly the worst offender on the visual front is Level 5, where you have to progress vertically up a mountain face. Perched on ledges are the little hammer men. It's virtually impossible to pick them out from the background, let alone their little hammers.

Despite the visual problems, and the slightly wonky fire mechanism, Ninja Spirit it a corking hybrid of martial arts and runny-jumpy action. A great deal of fun in a Water Margin sort of way.



SCORES

Graphics	80
Sound	65
Playability	85
Lastability	89

OVERALL 87%

Excellent combat romp, marred slightly by over-complex graphics and tricky fire controls

JIM DOUGLAS

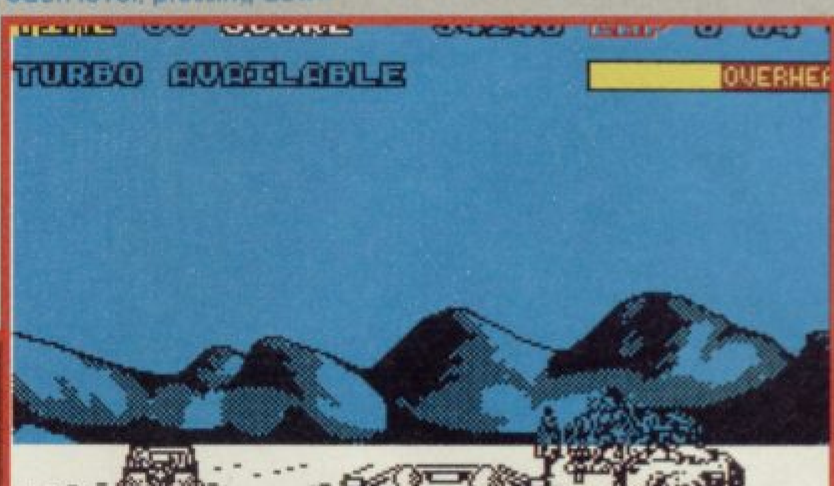
HACKING

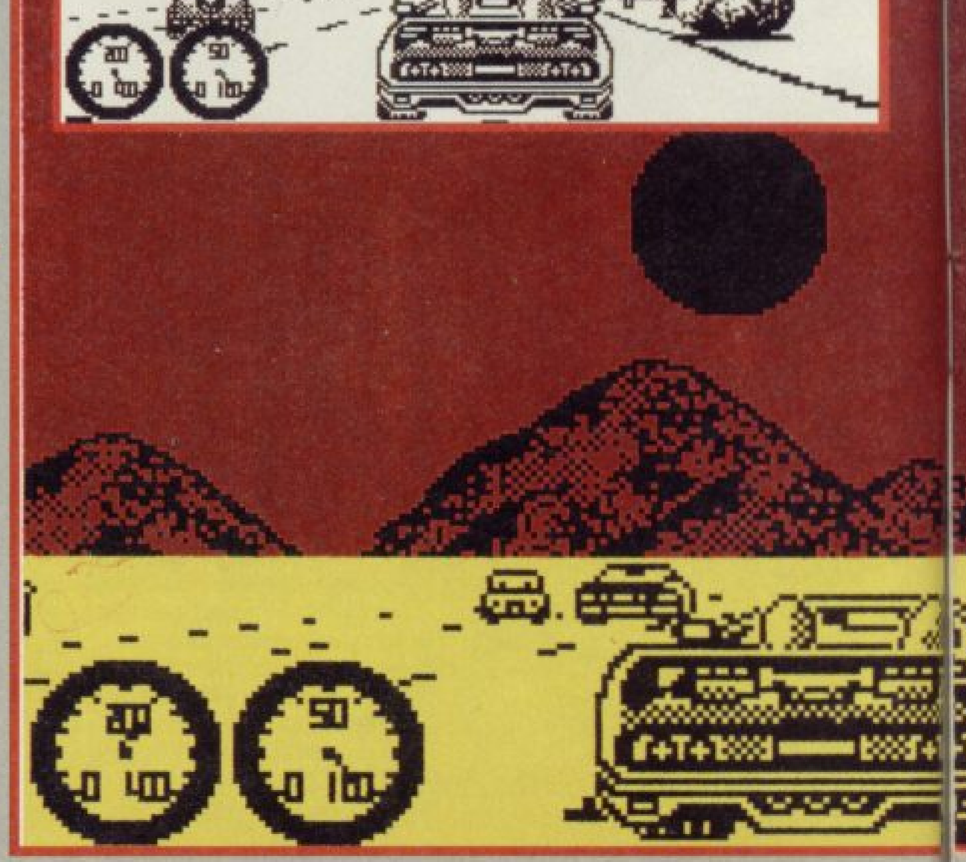


Yo Hackers! And a special hello to all the newly appointed squad members. There's been a bit of delay in getting prizes out to you all but please be patient 'cos we're working on a super deal for everyone! Suffice to say that you should have something to show for being a hacker and we're working on some seriously hard pieces of plastic that make Adrian Mole's cashcard look really limp and wimpy. Of course, everyone will still be getting their badges and bits of free software (If I've said you'll get them then you will!) 'cos I'm the dude at the sharp end. If all you squaders out there decided that I'd crossed you then the world just wouldn't be a big enough place for me to hide. Anyway, by the time you read this issue everything should be sorted out anyway so don't moan like some old crumbly with a face like a bulldog and the worlds biggest collection of confiscated footballs - be a def dude and not a doody (doodies are not cool and read doody Sinclair mags. Anyway, here we go with this month's Hacking Squad - there's new hacks for your fave games that give you an even wider range of cheats and we've got the first two levels of the uttetly brilliant Dan Dare mapped with a playing guide by yours truly so that you can get straight into it and be streets ahead before anyone else has even got the wrapping off! So get going with some heavy hacking. End of Chat

TURBO OUTRUN

Here's a wicked little tiplette from Liam Boyle of Edgeware in Middlesex. At the begining of each level, pressing down P and the space bar together will give you those oh-so-important extra few seconds that you always end up needing to nail the baddie. We like that 'cos it's wicked so Liam is now recruited. Welcome to the Squad!







ARKANOID II

Here's a wonderful cheat for all those Revenge of Doh wailers out there brought to you by newly commissioned Hacker Gareth (The Code) Cracker of Barry in Wales. When on the high score table type in PBRAIN for infinite lives. What a cracker - I've wanted to bust that game for ages so you'll get a special prize of a piece of software for that!

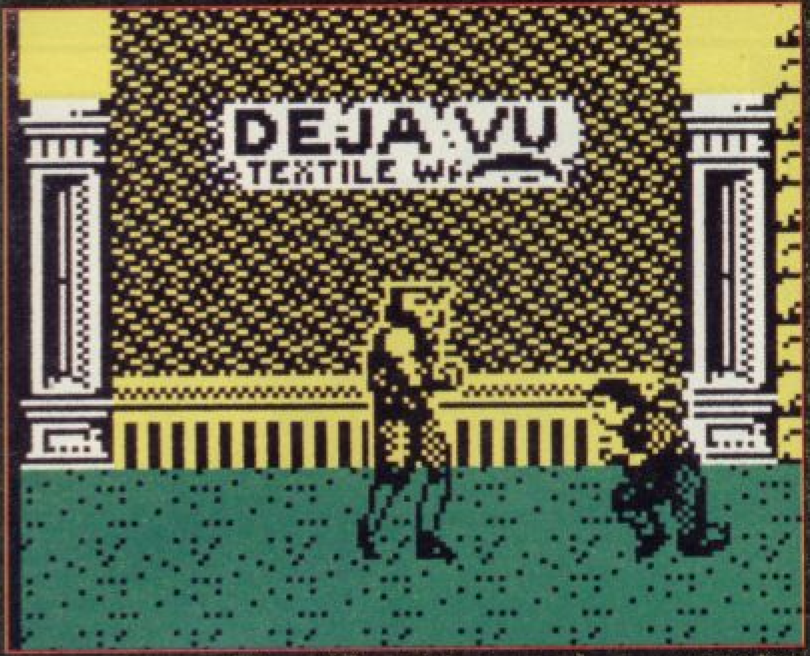
P47

Is it a bird, is it a plane? No it's Kevin Sparrowhawk from Long Newton, who's found out that by typing ZEBEDEE as your name on the high score table you get infinite P47's (Pity the Americans didn't know that during the war!) Well done.



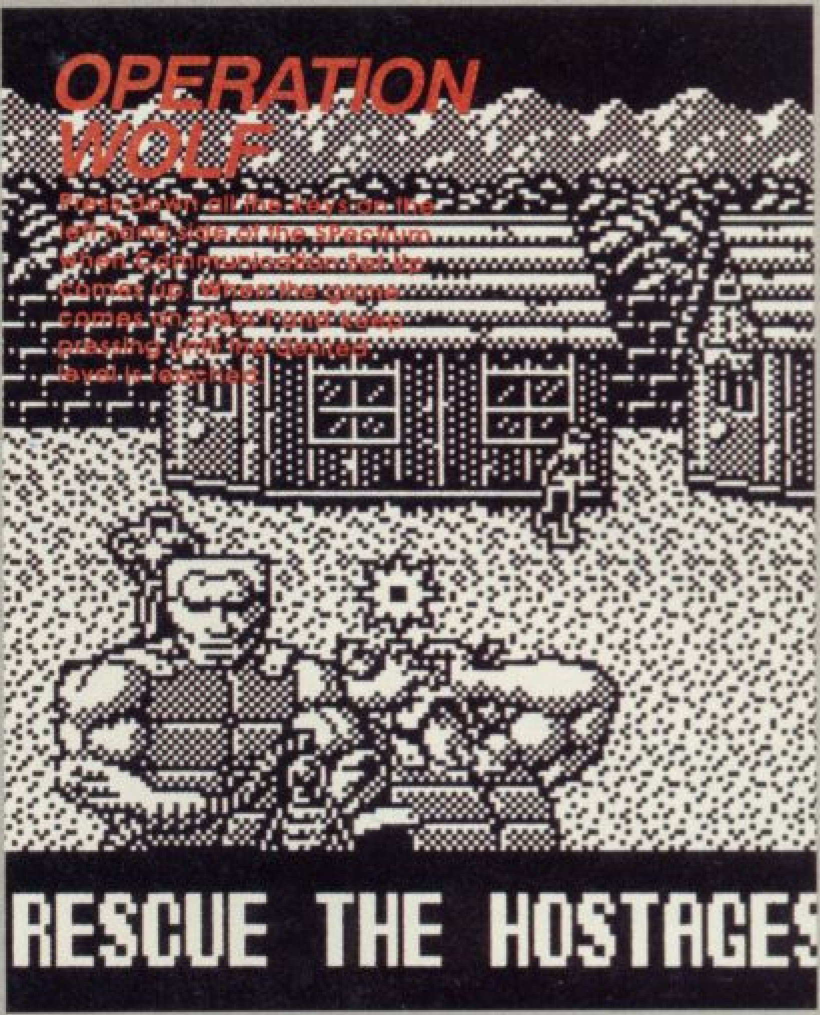
SHINOBI

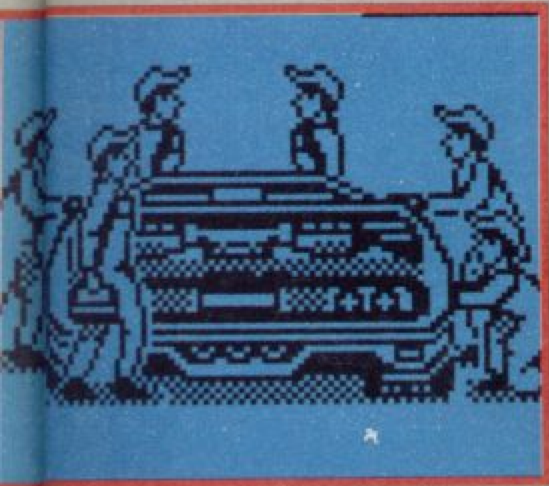
Here's a real clever hack from a new recruit James Mileham, of Stalbans in Herts. It's for infinite Ninja magic and the hack is this...When on the Menu screen, press 2 to access the redefine the keys for Big Jump, Magic and Pause buttons. When it asks you to enter the key for Magic press CAPS SHIFT and ENTER at the same time and presto! You have infinite Ninja magic at the press of the ENTER key.

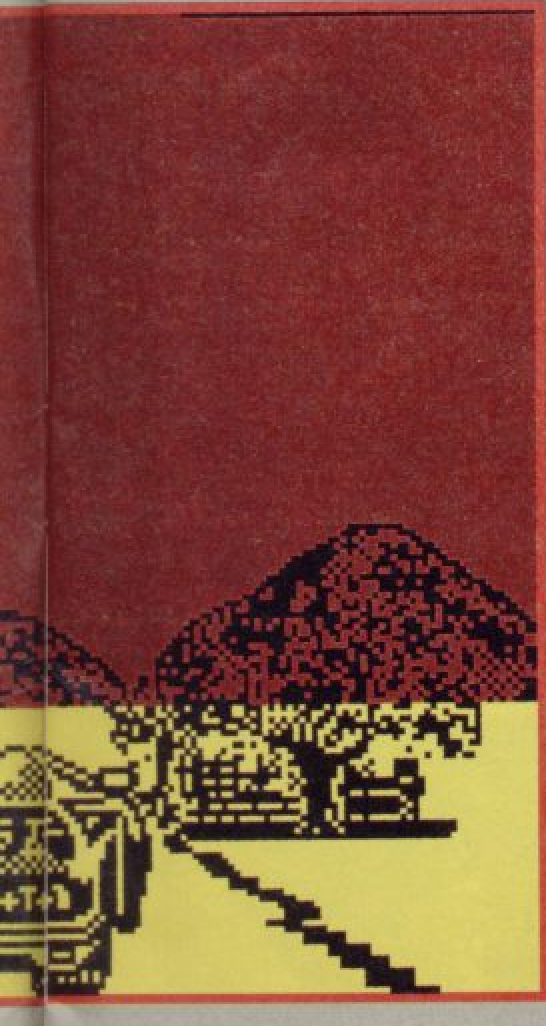


OPERATION WOLF

Press down all the keys on the left hand side of the Spectrum when Communication Set Up comes up. When the game comes on press 1 and keep pressing until the desired level is reached.







STREET FIGHTER

Richard Beesley, that well-known hacker, has just joined the Squad thanks to the following tips for streetfighter.

JAPAN

Retsu:
Crouch down and kick repeatedly. The moment Retsu copies you jump back. When he stops, crouch down and kick him again.

Geki:
Crouch down and kick again. When Geki crouches jump onto his head and kick it. BEWARE! He'll throw stones at you and you must avoid them by jumping over them.

U.S.A.

Joe:
Crouch down and kick. Joe may crouch and punch. Ignore him if he does. It won't prevent you from winning.

Mike:
Crouch down and kick. If Mike leans forward to punch you, move backwards. You'll loose a lot of energy if he hits you!

ENGLAND

Birdie:
Crouch down and kick repeatedly - you'll find him easy to beat.

Eagle:
Crouch down and kick. Don't stand up under any circumstances or Eagle will hit you for a lot of damage with his rapier(s).

CHINA

Lee:
He's impossible to kick whilst crouching down so use either flying kicks (which are a little risky), or jump onto his head and kick that (much safer move that).

Gen:
Crouch down and kick and he'll be a pushover.

THAILAND

Adon:
Crouch down and kick but DON'T stand up. If he hits he takes away over half your energy (he's sooo hard!)

Sagat:
He's real mean. When you start, wait until he throws a couple of fireballs at you and then crouch down and kick him up to three times. Now retreat and wait until he throws more fireballs and repeat the procedure. If Sagat advances towards you whilst you are retreating then jump over his head and then prepare for the fireballs.

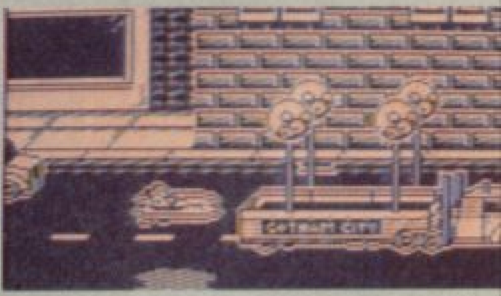
BONUS ROUND

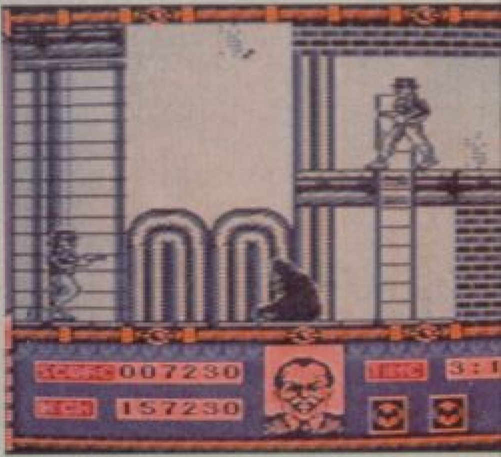
Wait until the bar has almost disappeared and then hit fire as fast as you can.
The screen shows a picture of Sagat flying through the air with a message. Then it's back to stage one.

BATMAN THE MOVIE

M Lesley of Barry in Wales holds down the keys ED209 to go to the next level. Well hacked - welcome to the Squad.







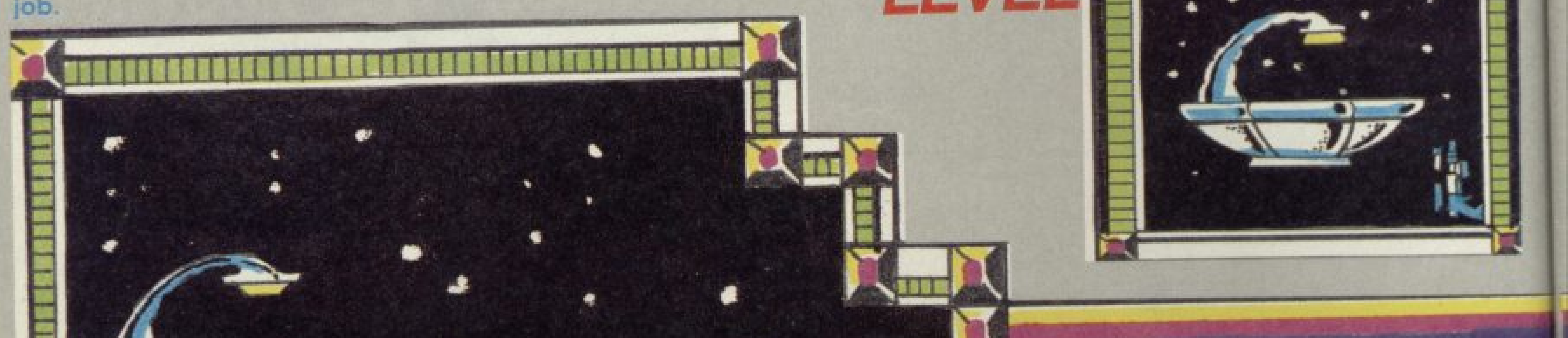
HACKING SQUAD

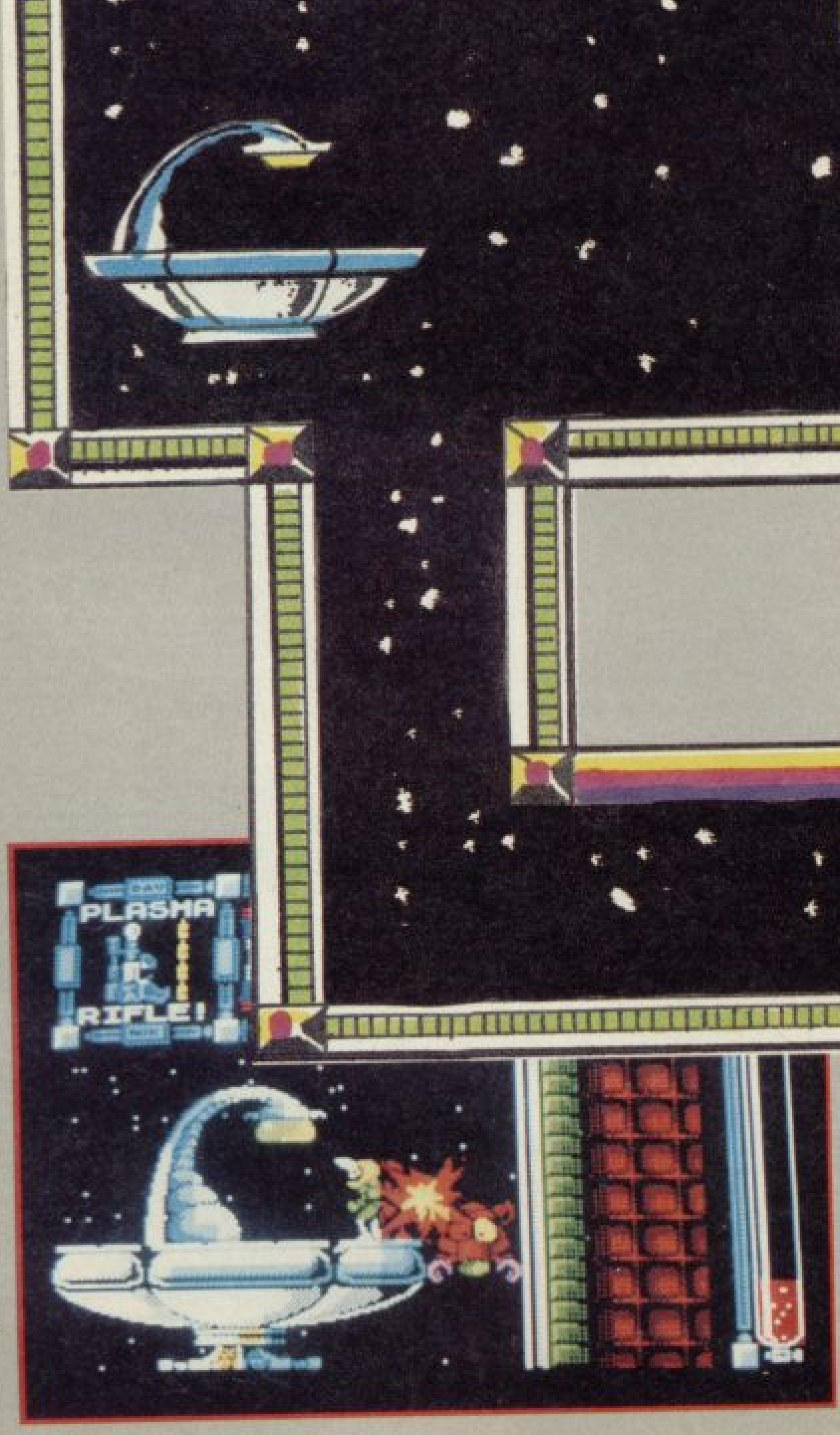
DAN DARE III - THE MAP -

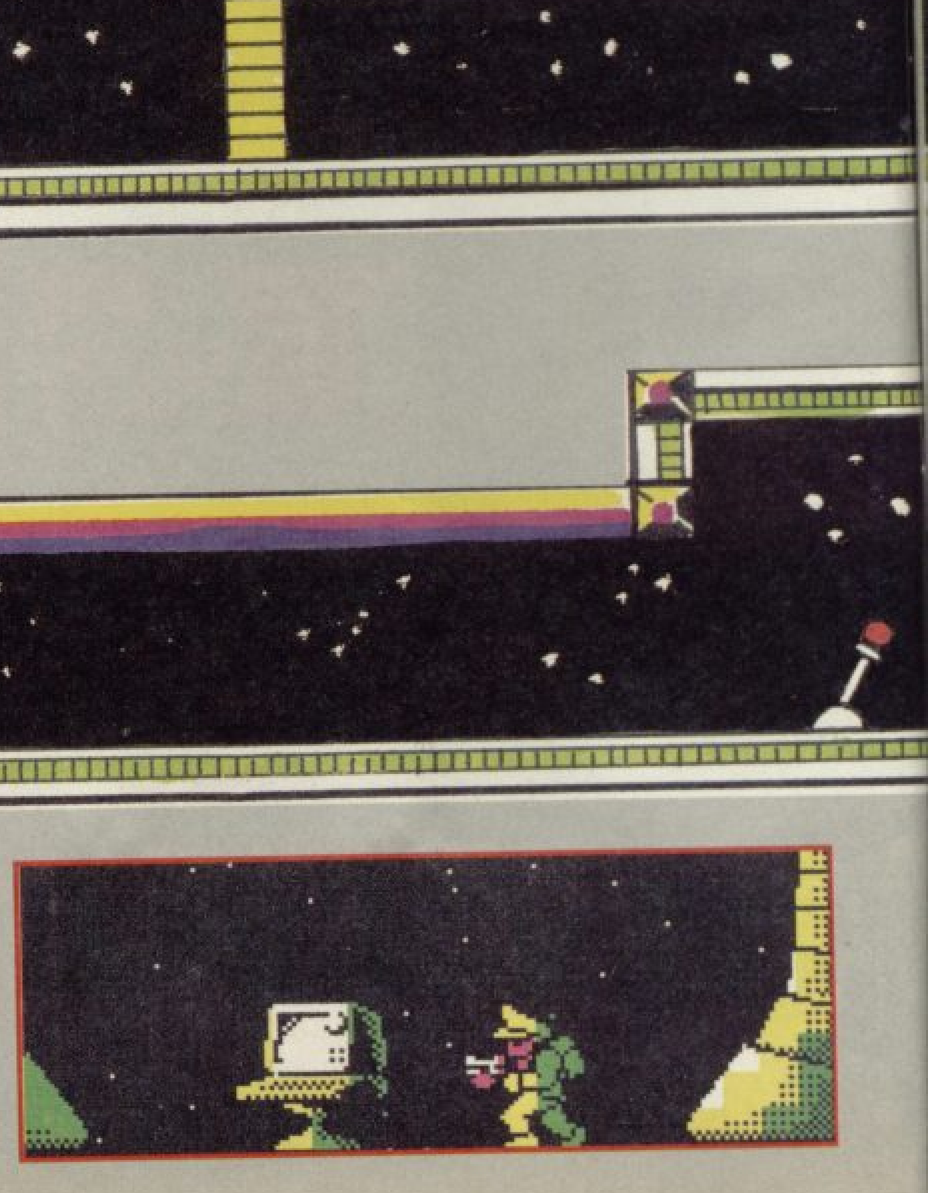
PLAYERS GUIDE DAN DARE
Okay, so we reviewed Dan Dare III in the February issue of Su when we gave it a well-deserved 92%, SU Classic and, in retrospect, probably should have marked it even higher! Anyway, Dan Dare should have just hit the streets by now and so, once again, the Hacking Squad gives you the ammunition that you need to blow the whole game wide open!

Store Level
This is the place that Dan gets to call home. It's littered with useful things like the battery pack topper upper and most usefully, the central stores computer from which he can order extra lives to replace any of the four that he may have lost, bouncing bombs, a nuclear bomb which clears the screen of mutants, ammo top ups or even blast off (if you've collect the 50lbs of fuel needed for the job.













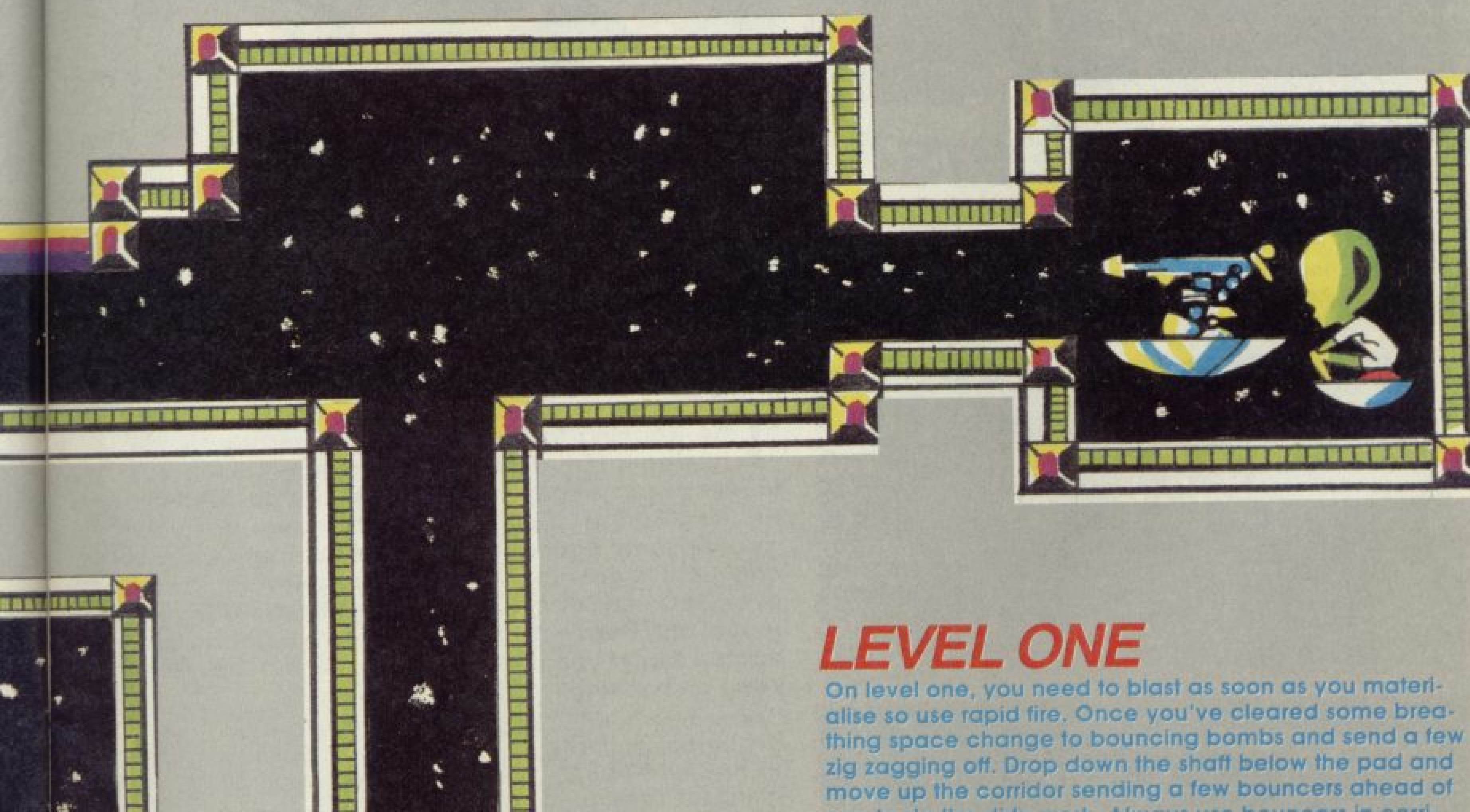
Players Guide

Store Level

When you begin at the store level you must clear the nasties away and rapid fire is the best way of doing this 'cos if you build up an R-Type like mega charge it is dissipated on contact with a single shot from the 'Treened' mutants. Go straight across to the Mekon and if you can hover just inside the entrance about half way up he has big problems trying to hit you. Just blast him to pieces using rapid fire or power shots.
Access the stores terminal and buy 99 bouncing bombs, any extra lives you may need and a few nukes. Don't top up ammo as there is a fresh plasma rifle in the transporter room.
Use bouncing bombs and rifle to clear this room. Once all the nasties have been vapourised they stay vapourised.

Teleporter

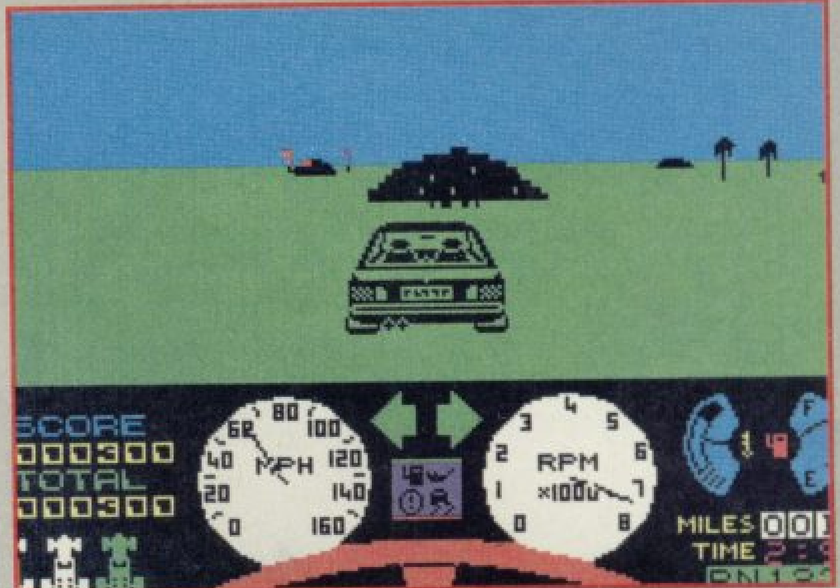
When you first start, only use the teleporter when Dan's energy is high unless you've played Master of the Lamps and can keep Dan within the squares. Try to follow the earlier, smaller squares rather than attempt to keep Dan within the larger squares and you should arrive at your destination with no sign of 'travel sickness'



LEVEL ONE

On level one, you need to blast as soon as you materialise so use rapid fire. Once you've cleared some breathing space change to bouncing bombs and send a few zig zagging off. Drop down the shaft below the pad and move up the corridor sending a few bouncers ahead of you to do the dirty work. Always use bouncers in corridors if you can and use them in batches of at least three. Move the lever to open the metallic door upstairs and return. If you're low on lives, return to the stores but once again, don't waste any money on top ups for your gun. Return to the corridor past the metallic door and send a few bouncers down and in the room beyond use a lot. If you ever get into trouble use a nuke but try and make sure you get maximum mutants on screen 'cos the smart costs a lot.
Once you've cleared the room you can collect another rifle or go straight to the Mekon. You can't destroy the gun but if you stick to the roof of the corridor you won't be hit. And then just frazz the Mekon to collect the teleport icon for the next level.

HACKING SQUAD



NIGHTMARE RALLY

William Howden sent a chunk of cheats in that he's put together on his SAM in Spectrum mode. Here's a couple of them. In Nightmare Rally, when the countdown has started press the SYMBOL SHIFT and the Q keys, sending the car whizzing through the level in less than 20 seconds. If you need to slow down at any point just press SYMBOL SHIFT and W to turn off the turbo hack.





GHOULS N' GHOSTS

Fed up of getting hacked to bits by the flying turtles of doom in this game? Well so is Squad member Robin Sharp of Dundee who uses the enter key to turn off the sprite detection. If the border goes blue then you can't be killed. Great eh? The simple ones are the best - and Robin's far from simple.

HACKING SQUAD

The Hacking Squad reigns supreme and as the number of Squaddies begins to grow the reasons to join increase too. Free software, badges and the Hacking Squad ID card. Every card gives you your own personal Squad membership number and you can use it to get money off full price software - it can even be used in conjunction with our Smash Coupons so that only Hacking Squad members will get the best deals. I'll brief you all fully next month but until then, keep on hacking!!

If you want to join the Hacking Squad then send all your very best and latest tips, hints, cheats and pokes to:
THE HACKING SQUAD, Sinclair User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London, EC1R 3AU.





SOLUTIONS

Only the elite need send anything to Solutions. You need to completely solve or map a particular game. It goes without saying that if you're the first to map and crack a new game - you get the goodies. And the goodies for Solutions are the best! £40's worth of software - you tell me what you want and if it's in the shops (my shops in London that is!) then it's as good as in your hands! Don't forget to mark your envelopes SOLUTIONS and put your phone number on your entry.



TAITO'S
ISLAND-HOP
COIN-OP
SLIP ON YOUR MAGIC SHOES, PRACTISE THROWING A RAINBOW AND HEAD FOR
DOH'S ISLAND.
ATTACK DOH AS HE HIMSELF SPRAYS YOU WITH AN ONSLAUGHT OF BULLETS. YOU'D BETTER BE QUICK ... THE
WATER'S RISING!
THERE MAY ONLY BE ONE WAY TO DEFEAT THE VICIOUS CREATURES ON
INSECT ISLAND
... FIND THE CUP OF DESTRUCTION ... YOU'LL HAVE TO BE PRETTY SLICK WITH YOUR RAINBOWS SO AS TO OVERCOME THE BEES, LADYBIRDS, SPIDERS, CATERPILLARS AND YIKES!! ... THE BEEHIVE!!
OH NO!
NOW I WISH I'D STAYED WITH THE BEES! THEY'RE JUST BUZZING BABES COMPARED TO THESE TANKS, PLANES AND 'COPTERS ON
COMBAT ISLAND.
YES, IT'S TIME TO BEAT THESE GUYS AT THEIR OWN GAME AND TAKE TO THE AIR ... NOW WHERE'S MY BOX OF WINGS?
NEXT STOP –
MONSTER ISLAND
– WELL YOU CAN JUST FIND OUT FOR YOURSELVES – WHEN GHOSTS, TROLLS, SKELETONS AND VAMPIRES INVITE YOU TO SUPPER ... IT'S TIME TO HIT THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD!
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Fiendish Freddy's BIG TOP OF FUN

Roll up, roll up, roll up! See the magnificent acts pleeese! 'Cos if you don't get a lot of money soon the bank is going to forclose on the £10,000 loan that's keeping the circus afloat and what will everyone do then?

The bearded lady's not going to get a job in a beauty parlour, the clowns won't get a job in the police force (hopefully), the plate spinning juggler's neither going to get a job in a restaurant nor most certainly, a pet shop.

So, once again it's down to you to save the day by performing impecably and perfectly to preempt the reappropriation of the patron's pleasure palace - namely, one big top. Should be easy but the bank have put in a ringer - one Fiendish Freddy and he's going to do his upmost to spoil your acts so that the bank can steal the show.

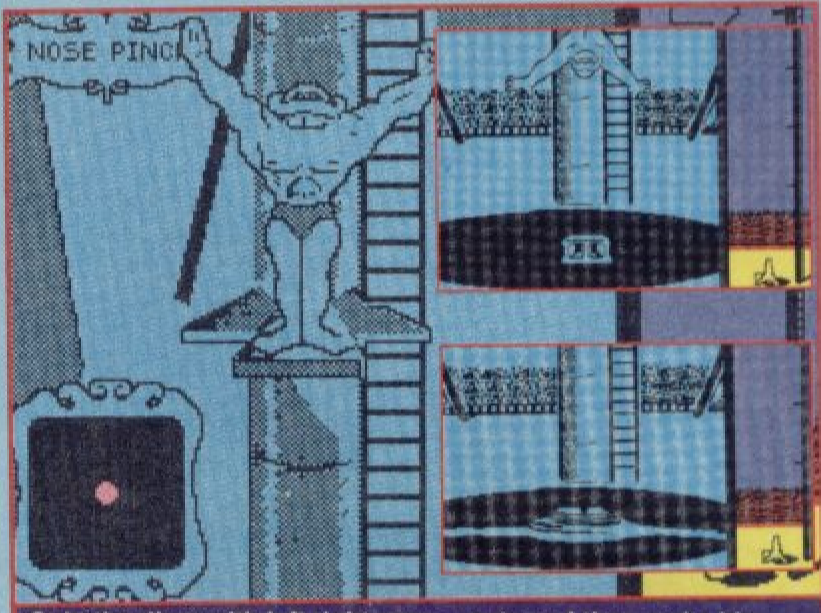
Each of the six acts throws the various members of your troop into the ring to perform their act. Your guiding hand is needed to help them accomplish each of their daring doos to delight the crowd and hopefully earn some hard cash from each of the four completely insane judges. Each, when they've finished fighting amonst themselves, will award a cash prize - the better the performance, the more dosh they'll dole out. "What do points make..?" Oh do shut up Bruce, you silly old fart.

Up to five players can take part with a practice mode where rad ringmasters can try their hand and perfect each of the various acts that they will have to undertake.

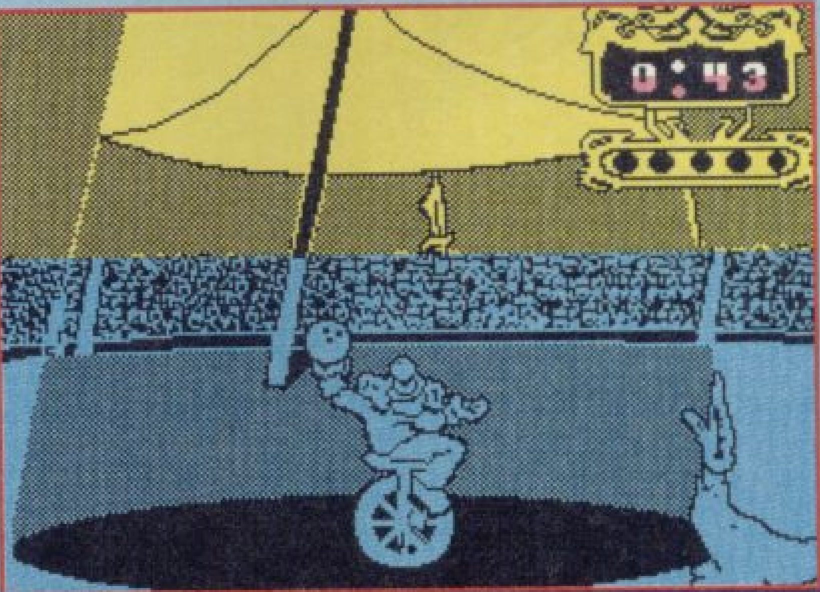
There are six acts altogether the first being High Diving and the rest being Juggling, the Tightrope, Fernadez the Human Cannonball, the Trapeze and a Knife Throwing act. With each act you must guide each of the artists so that their performances will be dazzling and convert into wads of cash with the judges - even with the interference from Fiendish Freddy.

The whole game is graphically very good and is full of humour, making it definately the most graphically funny game ever on the Spectrum. It's also great in terms of gameplay and everyone will have a particular favourite event; mine's the high diving because it's REALLY silly with Horace the High Diver pulling some hilarious stunts and poses as he hurtles down to land in anything from a large water barrel to a small glass. Even the judges themselves do some peculiar and hilarious stuff before giving out their cash marks. Overall, the circus is about entertainment and Fiendish Freddy's Big Top O' Fun spells it out to a letter.

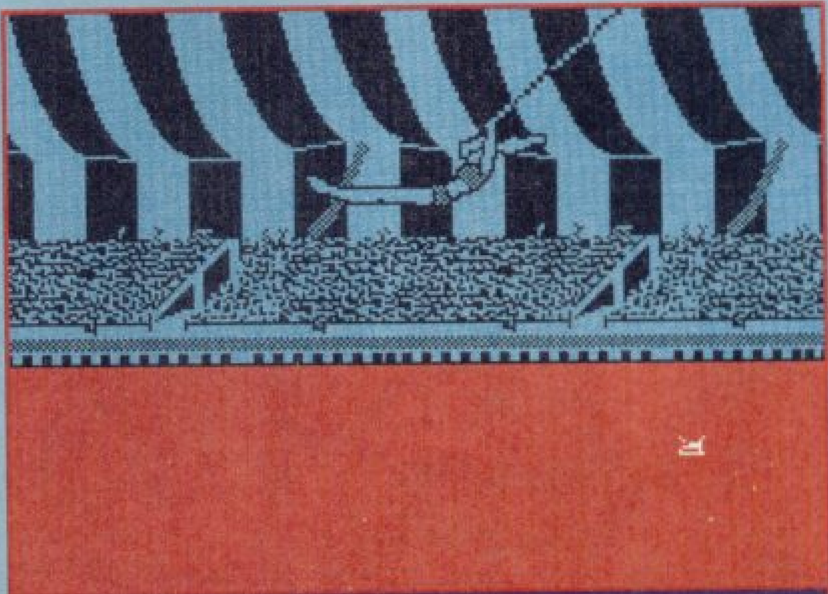
N.B. The disk version of the game was reviewed and NOT the casette version which is a single load game.



Spin the diver with left right movements and then make him pose before he hits the floor. It's always a good idea to line him up with his target though otherwise he splats flat!



It's juggling time and Jeffy the Jugger's amazing seal-like assisant is lobbing some juggling items at him. Let's all hope that he catches that knife correctly eh kids!



Finola's fat thigths flash past as she firmy fixes on flying through the air with the greatest of ease - That is, if Fiendish Freddy doesn't try to arrest her aerial antics!



Here, on the wirly wheel of death, you must try to aim your throwing knives so that they burst the balloons without bursting your buxom assistant. She really doesn't enjoy being stabbed!

SCORES

Graphics	91
Playability	86
Sound	90
Lastability	89

OVERALL 91%

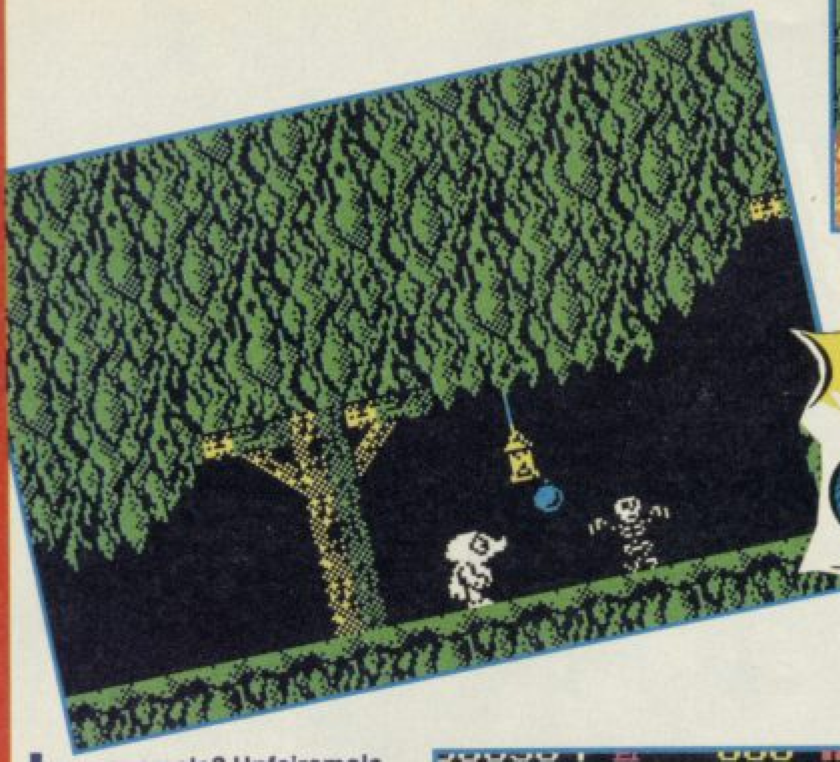
All the fun of the fair and a lot of laughs. A feast of fun!

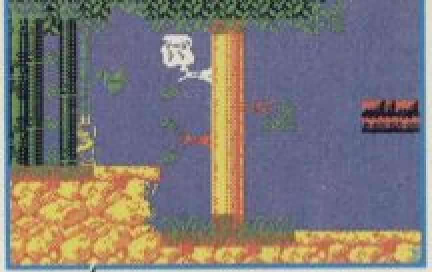
Label: MINDSCAPE *Price:* £14.99 Disk

GARTH SUMPTER



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Commodore 64 (cassette, disk) Amstrad (cassette, disk) Spectrum +3, Spectrum 48/128
Programmed by: Teque Software developments Ltd. Atari ST Screenshots
Published by Domark Ltd, Ferry House, 51-57 Lacy Road, London SW15 1PR Tel: 01-780 2224





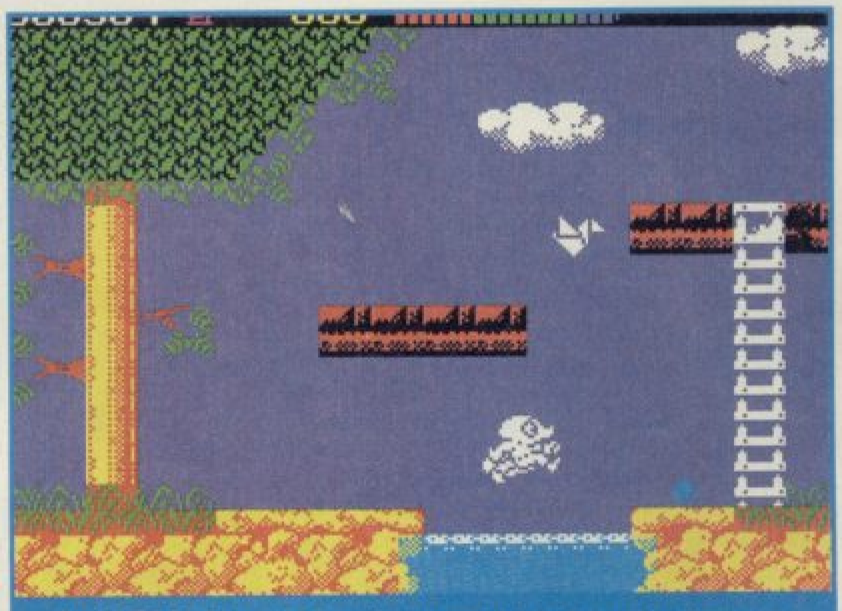


IMPOSSAMOLE

Impossamole? Unfairamole more like. Gremlin's latest and long awaited instalment in the Monty series features some really rather unnecessarily difficult bits.

By far the worst offender, deserving a good back-room mattress stomping from the Gaming Police are the Deadly Bats of Ultimate Death. These apparently innocent creatures flap about and fire bullets at you. No ordinary bullets these. In fact, they seem to follow entirely different rules to everything else in the game. Instead of draining your energy, as even the most deadly and enormous foes do, they kill you outright on their first contact. Game Over. No second chances.

There really isn't any excuse for such flaws in game design. It simply looks as if the pre-prod game was examined, deigned to be too easy and these leathery nemeses were inserted as half an afterthought.



And LEAP! Alas, the horrible paper bird of death will see to you even if the deadly water (?) doesn't.

Later levels feature other equally deadly beasts, and while some are more decently positioned, this sort of instant game ending strikes me as a bit unfair.

Most of the game, though, is perfectly enjoyable in a slightly routine sort of way. Your aim is to explore the undeniably large levels of a dangerous land in search of cash.

To cope with the denizens of the world you're exploring, you're equipped -at various stages of play- with bombs, a bazooka and, if the worst comes to the worst, your bare paws. You're also got a super weapon which kills every foe on your current screen. Needless to say, these are few and far between.

As far as I could tell, there's no way of telling how many bombs/bazooka rockets you've got left. This, inevitably wi[...]ave you [...] many a tricky sit[...] and unexpected[...]ed.

And another thing. I know that the Mole games are set in mystical magical worlds and I realize it would be pedantic and petty to expect absolute realism, but some things are still a little queer; why is the mole bigger than a human? Why do virtually all characters need to be shot twice (some even five times) with a Bazooka before they lie down? And why, when jumping, do you continually fall off ledges which you clearly reach?

If you're a fan of the genre, then Impossamole may be right down your tunnel. It offers a stiff challenge, full of colourful graphics, and the sort of hop, skip and jump progress which requires meticulous planning. Personally, I found it a bit of a drudge.





SCORES

Graphics	80
Playability	70
Sound	68
Lastability	70

OVERALL 74%

Nice break from humourless death and destruction. Bit low on the thrill front.

Label: Gremlin Price: £8.95

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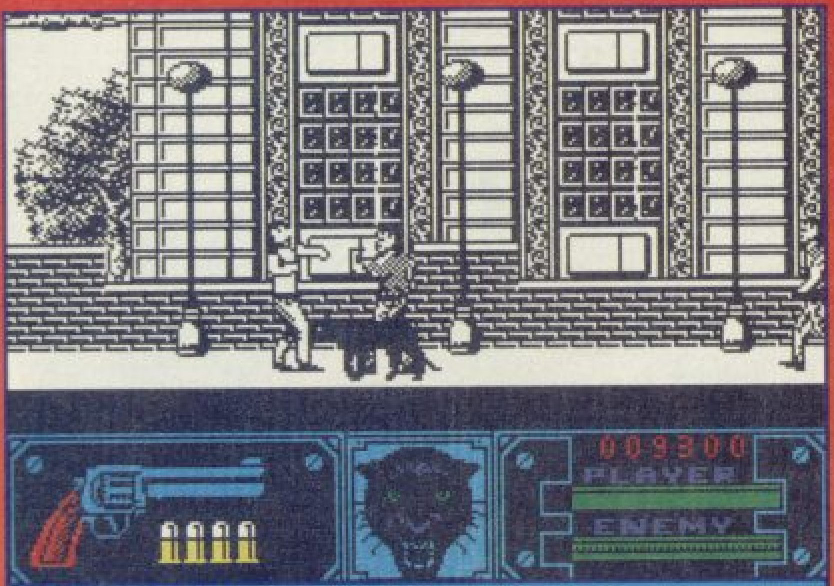
VTSU4

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WILD STREETS



Urf! One on the chin for James Taylor, CIA agent ordinaire. Black Virgin pads around helpfully.

Dodgy storyline ahoy! 1998 New York overrun by drug barons and weirdos. Pushers own whopper mansions and loonies live in ghettos. CIA clamp down and begin to win the war (why no earlier action was taken is unclear). Drug barons kidnap head of CIA in order to identify his lieutenants and bump them off. Lone agent, James Taylor and his panther - "Black Virgin" if you please - must infiltrate the city and rescue the CIA chief.

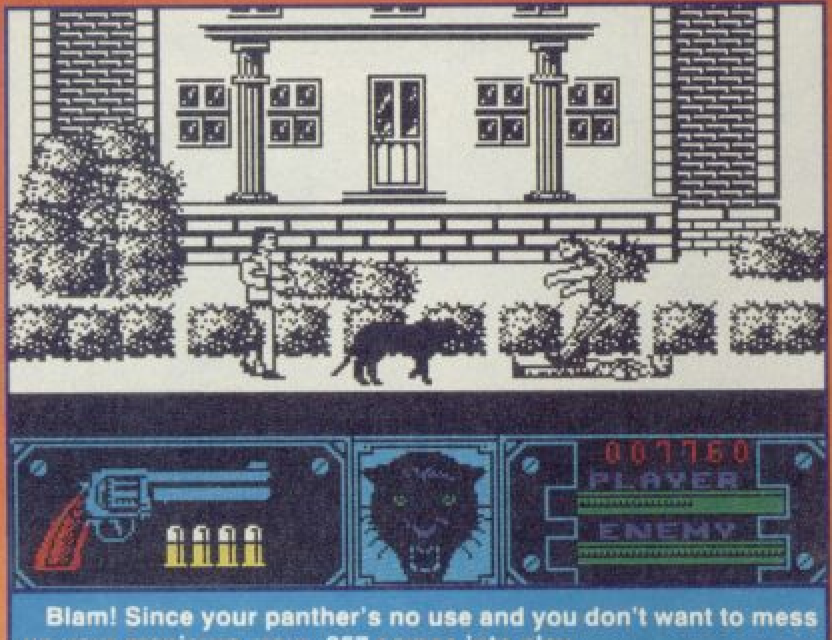
So, what we have here in an Escape from New York sort of way is a left-right scrolling walk'n'punch affair. What makes it different from Renegade (parts 1 to 3) Streetfighter, Yie Ar Kung Fu, Exploding Fist et al? Two things; your gun and your panther.

The gun is a .357 magnum six-shooter (no spare ammo; you have to rely on finding some on the floor - very efficient) which is fine, and very useful.

The panther, on the other hand, is about as much use as a chocolate fire engine in summer. Her main purpose is to savage to death the thugs which you can't handle. Unfortunately, you need to be on the floor, bleeding from every orifice before she registers that you need any help.

Once she's decided to participate in the action, as opposed to padding around like a furry imbecile, she leaps into the air and passes over the bad guys. Gripping, eh?

The graphics are pretty shoddy. Monochrome figures wander around in front of monochrome backdrops. The animation is less than brilliant, too, and the characters sometimes look downright silly when fighting. The panther doesn't even jump properly.



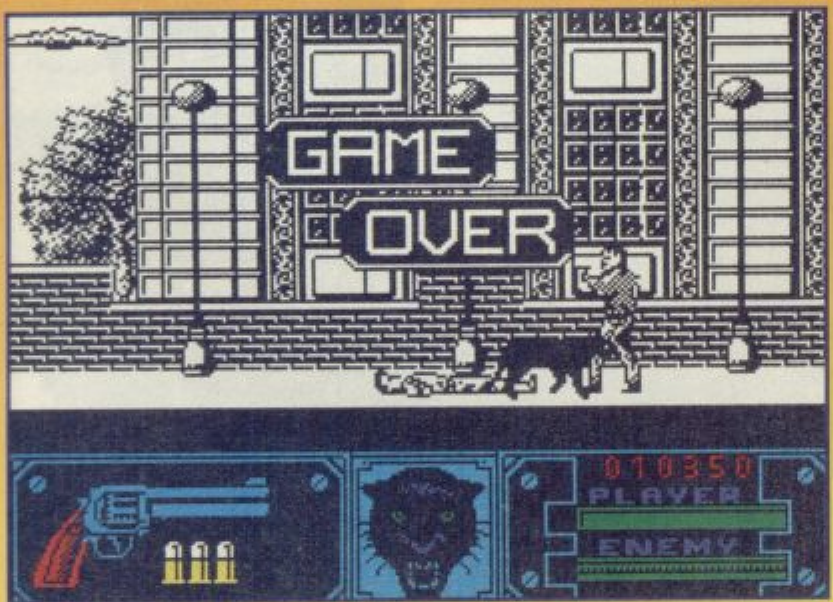
Blam! Since your panther's no use and you don't want to mess up your manicure, your .357 comes into play.

For most of the time, then, since you can forget about the Black Virgin being of any use, and spare ammo for your gun is thin on the ground, it's a straight fist fight.

The moves available are pretty comprehensive. Elbow jabs and high kicks being available, if not entirely easy to pull out of the bag in a tight situation.

The biggest problem with Wild Streets is that it's a crashing bore. Walk right, have a punch up, fall down, get up, shoot someone, walk right, have a punch up. Even on later levels, the action is really pretty dull.





SCORES

Graphics	55
Playability	60
Sound	59
Lastability	58

OVERALL 58%

Nice idea, marred by some lousy execution. Plenty of better beat-em-ups.

Label: Titus £8.95

JIM DOUGLAS



ANCO

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Oriental GAMES

Yes, it's back! The thwack of knuckle on skull! The crunch of falling bodies! The grunts of punched livers! Oh, you can't beat a martial arts game, and Oriental Games has to be one of the best EVER!

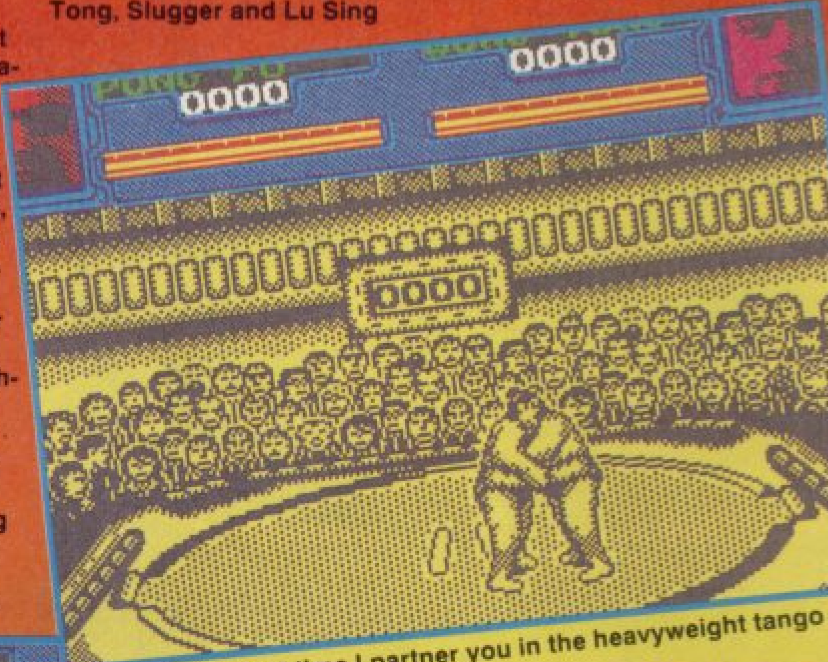
So what's the big gimmick that makes Oriental Games better than the horde of other combat games (seven thousand three hundred and twelve at the last count), most of which are merely poor imitations of the original and genuine Way of the Exploding Fist? For a start, there are no stupid gimmmicks; you aren't fighting deadly bunny-rabbits, fourteen opponents at a time, or giants wielding chainsaws. This is just realistic one-on-one combat, and all the better for it.

Second, you get four crunch-a-minute martial arts for your yen. The first two, karate and ju-jitsu, are basically kicking-and-chopping events; the third, kendo, involves bashing your opponent on the head with a big stick, and the last, sumo, is that weird Channel 4 event where huge fat chaps try to push each other out of the ring after two hours chucking salt around, staring at each other and grunting (fortunately you're spared these bits in Oriental Games).

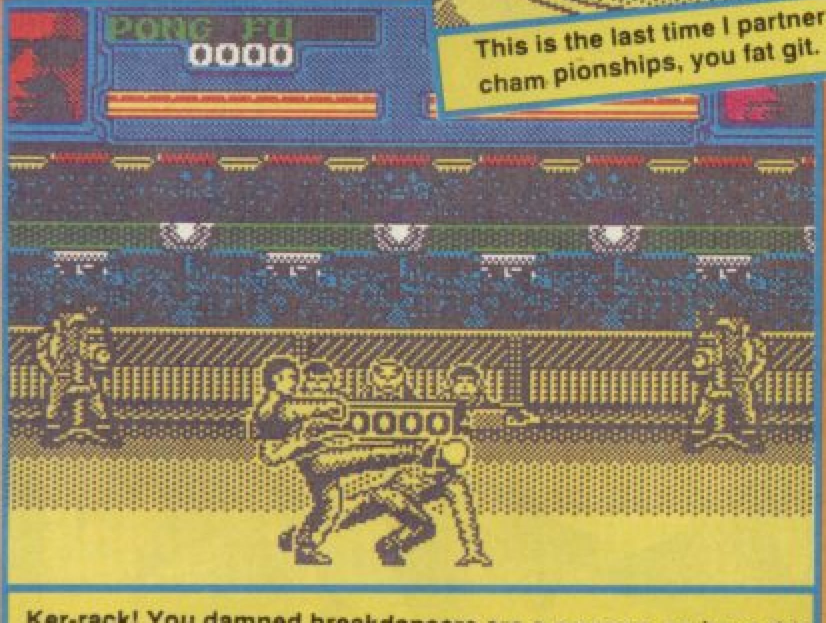
The scenario's a knockout competition in which up to four players take part against a total of sixteen fighters with charming names like Wong Tong, Slugger and Lu Sing compete through four rounds. Strangely enough your little man (mine was called Pong Fu) seems to be able to get magically fatter for the sumo rounds. Still, the sprites are excellent and the animation is fast, smooth and responsive, unlike some combat games where the whole thing is spoiled because you get your head kicked in while you're waiting for the sprite to respond to your joystick movement.

In each event you have a different choice of moves; flying kicks, ankle crunches, short jabs, stick smacks and so on. Sumo is of course a bit different; here your aim is to grab your opponent by the Y-fronts, and push him out of the ring. His favourite response is to try to twist you over, which is a bit of a challenge with a huge great fatty like you. As you'd expect, your progress is indicated by a strength bar at the top of the screen, and watch it carefully because a single smack on the head can take you from being on top to being out for the count.





This is the last time I partner you in the heavyweight tango cham pionships, you fat git.



Ker-rack! You damned breakdancers are a menace, so have this in the head for your trouble.

The backgrounds are great too; a television arena, the traditional sumo basho, a seedy gambling den and a sports arena. One of my favourite features is the digitised images of the contestants, which grunt with pain when they get a smacking; strangely enough they don't look a bit oriental, and I wouldn't be surprised if it was actually the programmer trying for a bit of fame and glory. Good luck to him, he's done a fine job. In fact my only reservation is that you have to scan briefly through the results of the rest of the rounds, even if you get knocked out in the first. Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn if

Right! Pass the salt, I'm back to the basho for a smasho.

SCORES

Graphics	89
Sound	65
Playability	92
Lastability	90

OVERALL 91%

Fab four-event oriental beat-em-up. Lots of variety, lots of fun.

Label: Microprose £8.95

CHRIS JENKINS




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1990
In 1982, Kevin Toms wrote Football Manager, six years (and half a million copies sold) later, Kevin went one better and produced Football Manager 2. A response to the ideas of thousands and thousands of Football Manager fans for an improved game. Football Manager 2 has, like its ancestor, proved a stunning success, a game with appeal that will last for years, more than satisfying old fans but creating new ones.
With the success of Football Manager 2, have come more suggestions for an even better game. Kevin has responded with "Football Manager: World Cup Edition", a game that takes management into the international arena, with all the thrills of world cup competition, a game that takes the unique components of its two ancestors and radically improves them a game that will better the best.
Kevin Toms.
Free
WORLD CUP EDITION WALL CHART WITH EVERY GAME.
Keep up to date during the World Cup this summer with your own special Football Manager Wall Chart.
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"I have been studying football tactics and interviewing professional managers. This new game will bring you the results – more tactical management, more realism, and more playability. I've done my best to give you the most entertaining game possible."
Good Luck
Prism Leisure Corporation Plc, Unit 1, Baird Road, Enfield, Middlesex EN1 1SJ.

AMERICAN TURBO KING

Only when a game like this comes along that the efforts of top notch programming houses are properly rewarded. Compared to American Turbo King, virtually every other game on the market seems superb.

It's one of those top-view vertically-scrolling driving games which went out of fashion with Spy Hunter. In this one you're taking part in five-stage race across America; through the California Beaches, Rocky Mountains, Grand Canyon, Great Lakes and New York City. The backgrounds are fairly dreadful; for instance, the natural splendour of the Great Lakes appears as a series of blue puddles. In the California Beaches level, spectators three times their scale size stand around the raceway like something from a Letraset catalogue. Now and again you get a boulder or a bridge, and if you see a series of vertical arrows, this indicates a ramp which you must drive up. If you do, you take a leap through the air which gets you over an obstacle such as a line of boulders or a chasm; if you miss the jump, you have to reverse and lose valuable time.

Now and again hostile cars or helicopters appear; you can shoot the cars, but unless you have a Magnum lightgun you just have to dodge the helicopters' bombs, because if you're hit enough you lose a life. If you have the Magnum, you can shoot the choppers, and you steer the car by shooting the left and right bars on either side of the screen. To reverse you shoot the car itself. I leave you to imagine how accurate this method of steering is.

The biggest problem with the game is that when you use a joystick, the control of the car is so sluggish that you can yank the joystick to the left, go out of the room, make a cup of tea, ring a pervy phone line, kick the cat around the garden, and come back, and your car is just starting to think about turning to the left.

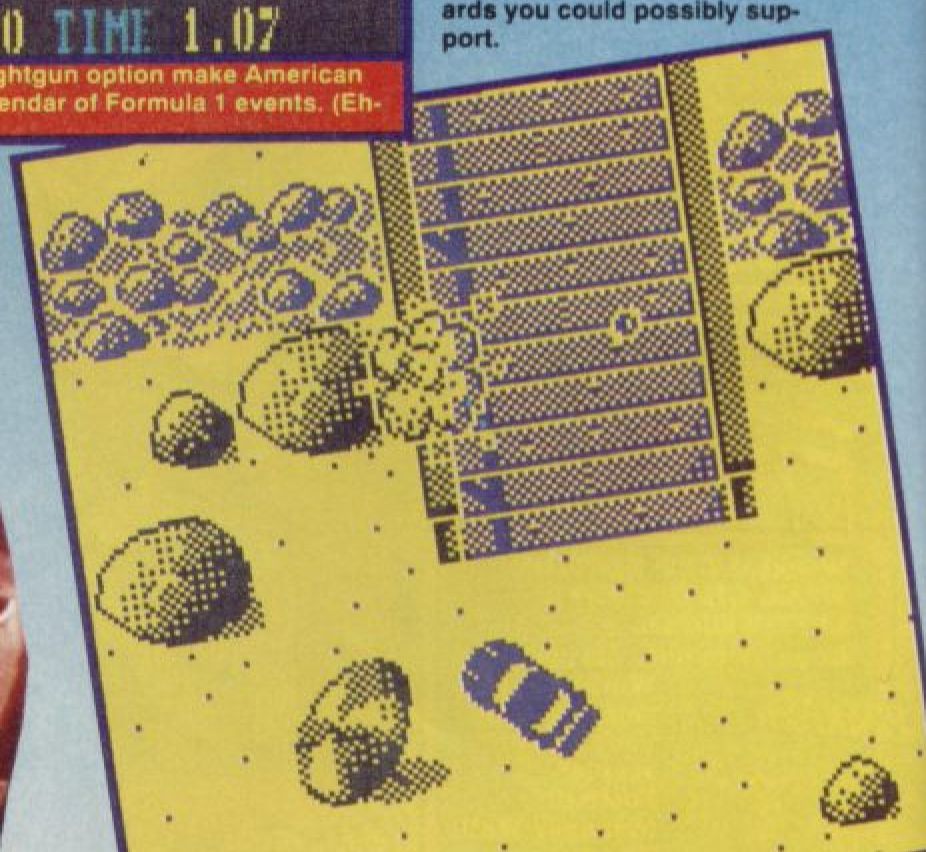
Not a winner by any standards you could possibly support.



Gaudy graphics and a ropey lightgun option make American Turbo a Sunday meeting in a calendar of Formula 1 events. (Eh-Ed)







SCORES

Graphics	59
Playability	58
Lastability	39
Sound	45

OVERALL 48%

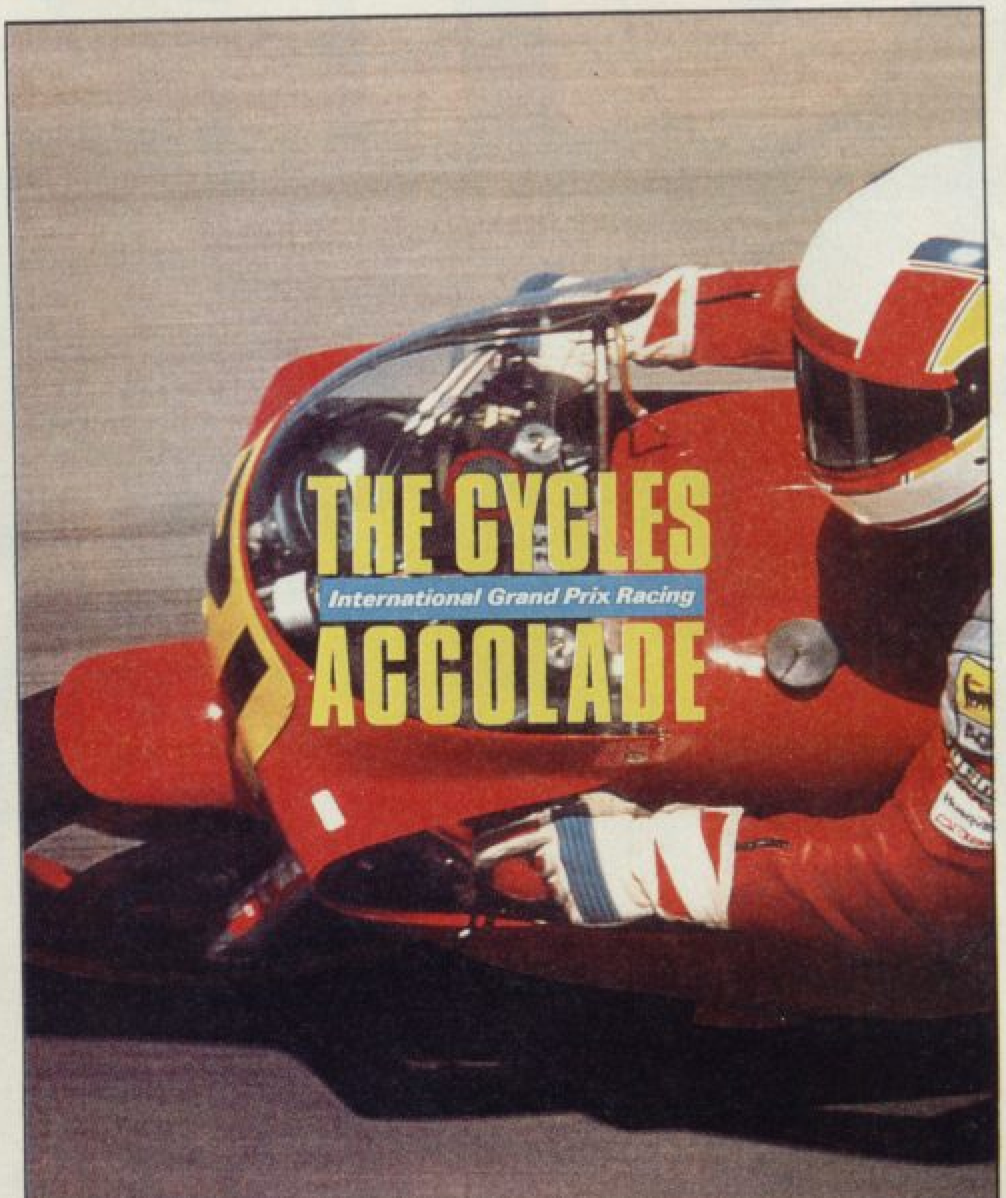
A prime stinker of a race game, no better for the Light gun option.

Mastertronic £2.99

CHRIS JENKINS

THE CYCLES™

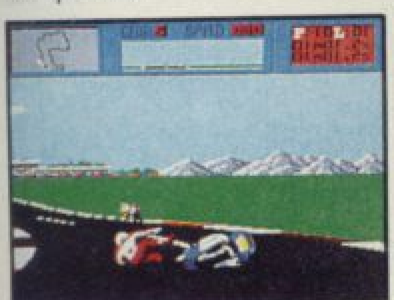
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The Cycles: International Grand Prix Racing wraps you around the chassis of the fastest bikes ever built as you compete in the International Grand Prix of motorcycle racing.
The only motorcycle game with a first-person perspective. Sense the rush of full throttle speed. Look over the handlebars to see the pavement disappear under your wheels.



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Screen shots from IBM P.C. version.

Will the racer in front blast into the lead or dump his bike trying? Do battle with the world's racers in the sport's premier events. Choosing either 500cc, 250cc or 125cc class races tackle 15 authentic Grand Prix courses across the world. From Australia to Brazil file down the foot pegs on the most gruelling circuits in motorsport.
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CHARTS

BUDGET TOP TEN

1 (1)	FANTASY WORLD DIZZY More fun than you could possibly imagine	C.MASTERS	£2.99
2 (4)	GHOSTS AND GOBLINS Coming on in leaps and bounds	ENCORE	£2.99
3 (2)	PAPERBOY He just can't stay in one place for long	ENCORE	£2.99
4 (7)	BUGGY BOY Colourful knockabout 'fun'	C.MASTERS	£2.99
5 (3)	TREASURE ISLAND DIZZY Eggy, Eggy, Eggy - here comes Dizzy Eggy	HIT SQUAD	£2.99
6 (5)	SHORT CIRCUIT Re-release of game of film of t-shirt etc	ZEPPELIN	£2.99
7 (NEW)	WORLD SOCCER Good grief, more ruddy football	HIT SQUAD	£2.99
8 (10)	RAMPAGE Monster bashers ahoy!	HIT SQUAD	£2.99
9 (6)	RENEGADE Still one of the best motorbikey games	HIT SQUAD	£2.99
10 (NEW)	COMBAT SCHOOL Attention! By the left, quick, creep into the chart	ENCORE	£2.99

ARCADE

1	CHASE HQ	OCEAN
2	TURBO OUTRUN	US GOLD
3	BATMAN	OCEAN
4	ROBOCOP	OCEAN
5	OP THUNDERBOLT	OCEAN

SIMULATION

1	GAZZA'S SUPER SOCCER	EMPIRE
2	FOUR SOCCER SIMS	CODEMASTERS
3	HARD DRIVIN'	DOMARK
4	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE
5	BOXING MANAGER	GOLIATH





TS

FULL PRICE CHART COMMENT

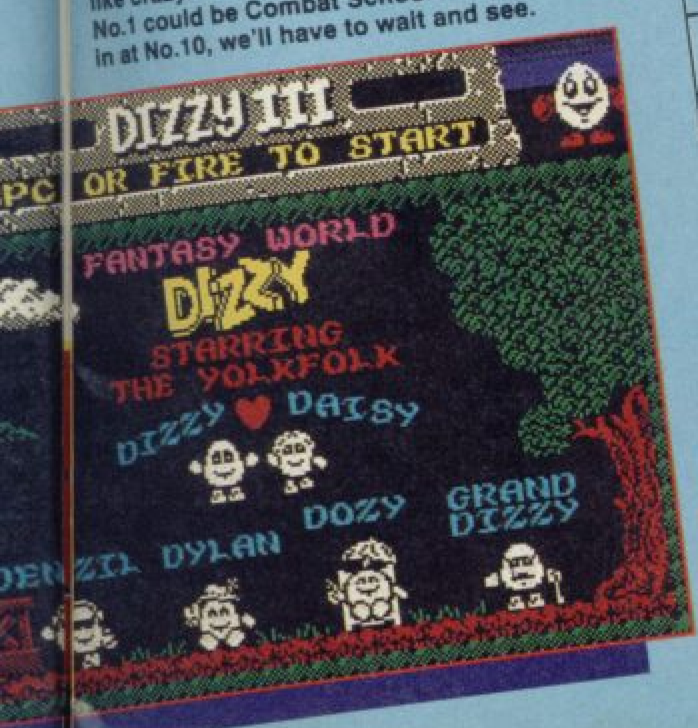
Seems to be a new trend in the chart for Simulations, with a few newies on the scene, like Test Drive 2, Football Manager 2 and Boxing Manager. As for the rest, they're all just moving and a-grooving around the top 20 like mad things. For the No1 spot our money's on either 'Gazza' or the Codies 'Four Soccer Sims'.





BUDGET CHART COMMENT

Combat School and World Soccer Whether It's Full price or budget games, you lot are just completely wild about Football aren't you? World Soccer has now arrived at No.7 and will no doubt hurtle up the chart like crazy. Maybe the only thing to beat it to No.1 could be Combat School which is new in at No.10, we'll have to wait and see.



FULL-PRICE TOP TWENTY

1 (1)	CHASE H.Q. Refusing to budge from the top slot	OCEAN	£9.99
2 (4)	TURBO OUTRUN One of this year's better driving games	US GOLD	£9.99
3 (5)	GAZZA'S SUPER SOCCER Could this be next month's No.1.	EMPIRE	£9.99
4 (2)	BATMAN - THE MOVIE Nana nana nana nana number 4	OCEAN	£9.99
5 (6)	ROBOCOP Up and down like a bloomin yo-yo	OCEAN	£8.95
6 (18)	4 SOCCER SIMULATORS The Codies are fair whooshing up the chart	C.MASTERS	£8.99
7 (7)	OP THUNDERBOLT Worthy successor to Op Wolfie	OCEAN	£9.99
8 (11)	GHOULS AND GHOSTS A rather samey version of Ghosts & Goblins	US GOLD	£9.99
9 (3)	GHOSTBUSTERS 2 More Ghosts and wibbly slimely things	ACTIVISION	£9.99
10 (10)	DOUBLE DRAGON 2 Great beat-'em-up stays still this month	VIRGIN	£9.99
11 (9)	HARD DRIVIN' A game of car driving and hardness!?!	DOMARK	£9.99
12 (8)	UNTOUCHABLES Elliott Ness takes on the underworld	OCEAN	£9.99
13 (NEW)	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2 As if there aren't enough Footy games	ADDICTIVE	£9.99
14 (NEW)	TEST DRIVE 2 Prrrt, what an average driving game	ACCOLADE	£9.99
15 (12)	POWER DRIFT A jolly nice drivey adventure	ACTIVISION	£9.99
16 (RE)	NINJA WARRIORS Hiyaaaaaah - neck chops all round	VIRGIN	£9.99
17 (NEW)	BOXING MANAGER It's a boxing sim, nah wot aah mean, Arry?	GOLIATH	£9.99
18 (RE)	TOLKIEN TRILOGY Loadsa luverly hob-gobliny fun	BEAU JOLLY	£12.99
19 (14)	MYTH Another goodie from the System 3 lads	SYSTEM 3	£9.99
20 (13)	100% DYNAMITE 100% whizzo, 100% excitement, 100% fun	OCEAN	£9.99

All thanks to US Gold and their amazing E-Motion!

WIN £5

Yes! We had such an amazing response to our last Compocard that we're running it again. This time, you've got an even better chance of winning.

The first prize is a whopping great 500 CASH. There are a further TWO HUNDRED runners-up prizes of games from US GOLD - See the list opposite.

Just take a second to think what you could to with £500 cash... Brand new colour telly? Top of the range hi-fi? Two-and-a-half thousand Kit Kats? Twenty pairs of 501s? 170 twelve-inch singles (That's every single Top Ten hit, every week, for the next four months!) You could spend 21 hours on the phone at mega-rate. You may even be able to pay for your poll tax. (If you're lucky)

WHAT YOU DO

So, what do you have to do? Couldn't be simpler. Dial the phone number at the bottom of the page. Remember to have your card from the front cover in front of you.

The voice on the phone will welcome you to the service and ask you three simple questions. Answer all of these correctly and you'll be asked for your personal number.

If your number is a winner, you'll be informed what to do next.

The Questions

1) E-motion is what sort of game?

a) New-Age b) Adventure c) Combat

2) US Gold's most comprehensive compilation is:

a) History in the Making b) Leaderboard collection c) Outrun

3) Sinclair User's cover game for issue 96 was:
a) X-out B) Crackdown C) Hammerfist

Note:

Please speak clearly! Don't say "erm" and always remember wait until prompted before giving any numbers or answers. You can enter by post if you wish by sending you card and the answers to the questions to Phone Compo 2, Sinclair User, 14 Holkham Road, Orton, Peterborough, P62 OUF

0898

200 RUNNERS-UP GAMES!

Rules and Costs:

Call Charges are 25p per minute cheap rate and 38p per minute at other times. No employees of EMAP or US Gold are eligible for entry. The Editor's decision is absolute and final. No correspondence will be entered into. Winning numbers must be validated by a Hotline Compocard 2. Damaged/defaced cards will not be accepted. Sinclair User accepts no responsibility for cards lost or damaged in the post. Entry to this competition signifies understanding and acceptance of these rules.

E-MOTION

E-motion (reviewed ish. 97) got a stonking 89% It's like a cross between asteroids and snooker. Guiding your craft around increasingly alien environments, you've simply got to bounce similar shaped objects against one another. This makes them disappear. But should you cause two dissimilar objects to make contact - boing! - another, smaller shape appears.

The more frantic your efforts become, the more mistakes occur. There's no time to hang about, either. Dally too long and the spheres become unstable and explode!

If you're anything other than a laser-head, you really ought to check it out.

RUNNERS UP

We've got 200 tapes kindly donated from US Gold. If you've got a runner-up card, one of the following titles will be yours!

MOONWALKER OUTRUN TURBO OUTRUN THUNDER BLADE DREAM WARRIOR HUMAN KILLING MACHINE CHICAGO 30's MAD MIX (PEPSI CHALLENGE) HEROES OF THE LANCE DRAGONS OF FLAME HEAVY METAL LEADERBOARD LEADERBOARD COLLECTION 3 LEADERBOARD TOURNAMENT WORLD CLASS LEADERBOARD FAMOUS COURSES 1 ECHELON GAUNTLET GAUNTLET II INDIANA JONES (LAST CRUSADE) ROAD BLASTERS 1943 BIONIC COMMANDO FORGOTTEN WORLDS BLACK TIGER GHOULS 'n' GHOSTS LAST DUEL LED STORM STREET FIGHTER STRIDER TIGER ROAD 4x4 OFF ROAD RACING CALIFORNIA GAMES FINAL ASSAULT GAMES SUMMER EDITION GAMES WINTER EDITION IMPOSSIBLE MISSION II STREET SPORTS BASKETBALL WINTER GAMES WORLD GAMES VIGILANTE ARCADE MUSCLE (Compil) COIN-OP HITS (Compil) COMMAND PERFORMANCE (Compil) CRASH SMASHES (Compil) EPYX ACTION (Compil) GIANTS (Compil) GIANTS II (Compil) GO CRAZY (Compil) WINNERS (Compil) HISTORY IN THE MAKING (Compil) ULTIMATE COLLECTION (Compil)

500136

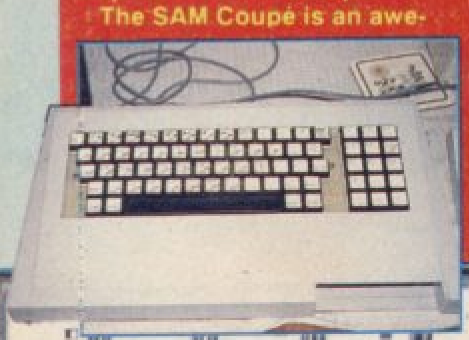
COU SCO

A graphical breakthrough in SAM Coupé graphics, available only to SU readers with a SAM, is demonstrated on this month's megatape. The trailblazing programs were written by Simon N Goodwin the well known super dooper Coupé scooper who, after having a top 20 spectrum game hit in 1983 with DkTronics Gold Mine, has since received even more acclaim with a string of compilers and utilities for the Spectrum. He's spent the last two years involved in the development of the SAM and we visited him in his Black Country hideaway to see how he coped with the Coupé.

The SAM Coupé is an awesome step up from the Spectrum with up to 128 colours on screen at once at double the ZX resolution for 512 x 192 pixels or 85 column text. Yet the exclusive demos on Megatape 27 boost the performance of the Coupé still more, giving a resolution of 512 x 384 and a palette of 8,256 distinct colours!

Simon's office is working Sinclair museum, with old Spectrums, a Plus Three and a QL all jostling for position with two Coups. He's used a prototype Coupé since November 1989 and finds the hardware unusually reliable. "I get a lot of main spikes here which often crash my QL's and even my old Marantz CD player which has to be turned off and on before it'll work again."

"Every so often the 48K Spectrum goes down too - usually when I've just finished a complicated Specdrum rhythm and even the +3 crashes every few weeks after a big spike. But both the prototype and production SAMs have been impervious to mains interference. I see the monitor flash but the Coupés just keep on running.

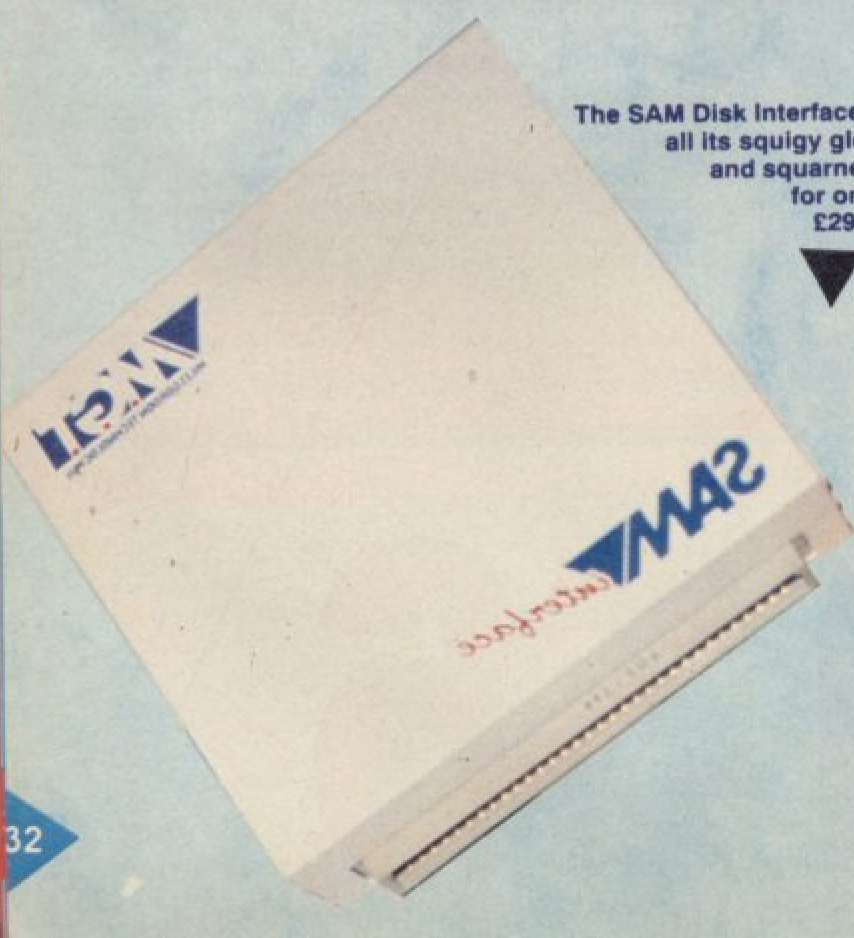




Simon's prototype SAM. The keys were replicated to ensure Spectrum compatability



The SAM COUPE complete with a disk drive - (unfortunately someone's put the drive in the space for the second drive so it won't work. I know 'cos that's what Garth did with ours and Simon told him he was stupid and he blubbed!



The SAM Disk Interface in all its squigy glory and squarness for only £29.95

SAM STRINGY BITS

Simon showed us the latest SAM add ons, like the SDI box (SAM Disk Interface) which lets you hang any standard drive or printer off the Coupé expansion port. Thus allowing the SAM to use Amstrad three inch disks or cheap IBM five inch floppies as well as MGT's own 3.5 inch Lifetime Drive.

Spectrum Users can use this interface to hook the drive from an old Spectrum disk system into the Coupé. The combination of a tape SAM and SDI is 45 quid cheaper than a Coupé with the drive inside - and you gain a printer port into the bargain!

The SDI comes with SAMDOS and utilities on tape, so you can set it up for any drive format. The cable from a Plus D or Disciple drive plugs straight into the SDI; otherwise you can use a QL or BBC Micro disk cable, with virtually any floppy drive made in the last decade!

If you've already got a twin-drive Coupé you may be more interested in the Communications interface, which has the same Centronics printer port, plus a serial RS-232 for modems and communication with computers that lack SAM's built-in MIDI ports. Like the SDI, the Communications interface costs £29.95 including the VATman's share.



UPE
OOP





"You hum it son, I'll play it!" I think he misses his Speccy midi



The ROMRAM interface lets software testers run two copies of the SAM ROM, with one inside and the other in 32K of external RAM. That's how MGT test the new ROM; at the press of a button the ROMRAM lets them swap back and forth to compare old and new routines.

All these widgets have gold-plated pins that fit the 'Euroconnector' at the back of the computer, so there's no risk of the wobbly connections or accidental short circuits that plague the Spectrum. MGT's next project is a Card Cage which lets you use several widgets at once.

Sadly, there's little chance that SU's new graphic modes will receive any support from the new ROM, as the 32K chip is already packed solid with goodies. The good news is that the upgrade is on its way and works fine with the custom code on our Megatape.

THE NEW MODES TECHIE BIT

The demo programs simulate new graphic modes on the SAM Coupé. These modes are not directly supported by SAM BASIC commands, but it's easy to set them up with a mix of standard commands, as the programs prove.



A gob smacking 912 colours available from a palette of over 3,000!!

MODE 3+3

This shows 512 x 384 pixels - twice the normal maximum resolution. The program works by listing itself in several sections and copying alternate display lines to two other screens.

When both screens are ready procedure FLIP1 displays the new mode, with 38 lines of text at a depth of ten pixels per line. You can push this up to 48 lines if you don't mind characters on adjacent lines knocking together, as they do on the ST or PCW displays. Just set the character depth to 8, rather than 10, with the CSIZE command.

This mode lets you pack twice the normal amount of information onto the screen. This demo gives a text display but similar routines could be used for fractals or ultra hi-res games. FLIP2 does the same thing as FLIP1 but uses machine code rather than SAM BASIC. Press the BREAK button (at the back) to regain control.



The oh-so-normal palette of SAM colours.

MODE 4*4

Loading this mode shows the normal Spectrum resolution of 256 x 192 pixels, but there are NO attribute restrictions and you can have up to 256 colours on each line of pixels. There can be literally thousands of colours on the whole screen, using palette interrupts to change the colours from line to line.

Officially the Coupé is limited to 16 colours per line, and 128 colours per screen. This is true if you use the standard modes 1-4, which are fully supported by the ROM - but programming tricks can boost the choice to 8,256 colours (worked out from 128 x 128, minus 8128 'complimentary pairs' like [24,10] which looks the same as [10,24]).

The demos work with a standard TV or monitor, but they use an 'interlaced' picture, alternating between two display frames to get the extra resolution. You can minimise flicker by careful choice of colours and twiddling the 'brightness', 'contrast' and 'colour' knobs on your display.

The flicker disappears completely on a CM-8833 monitor if you dim the screen and background lights. The Philips 8833 being an ideal match for SAM, with its SCART input and stereo sound.

MODE 4*4 uses 31 standard SAM colours - two sets of 15 colours plus black for the background. The sets are matched for brightness, to minimise flicker; the code includes a function LUM to work out the apparent brightness or 'luminance' of any colour. Combinations of two sets give 225 distinct colours, plus black - and you can use all of these anywhere on the screen without restriction!



Simon weighs up the two machines. His verdict of the SAM - It's brilliant!

Bloodwych



ARGUE! BARTER! LIE THROUGH YOUR TEETH!!!





Atari ST Screen Shots

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Spectrum (disc)	£14.99
Amstrad CPC (tape)	£9.99
Amstrad CPC (disc)	£14.99
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Commodore 64 (disc)	£12.99

As the people of the Bloodwych awake to a new dawn, they find a stranger in their midst – from one of many races he has come. His task; to halt the demon that lies dormant within the Castle of the Bloodwych.

Unification of the Crystals of Sanguis will secure the Behemoth in his lair for all eternity. Should they remain separate, then he shall rise to bring darkness into the world.

This unique role-playing fantasy game allows greater interaction with the environment than has ever been seen before. Argue, barter, negotiate – even lie through your teeth! The fully implemented personalities of all the characters in Bloodwych allows a rich style of role-playing that has only been dreamt of.

With one or two player simultaneous mode, this is the game that you've been waiting for. Bloodwych for those that dare!

CONNECT!

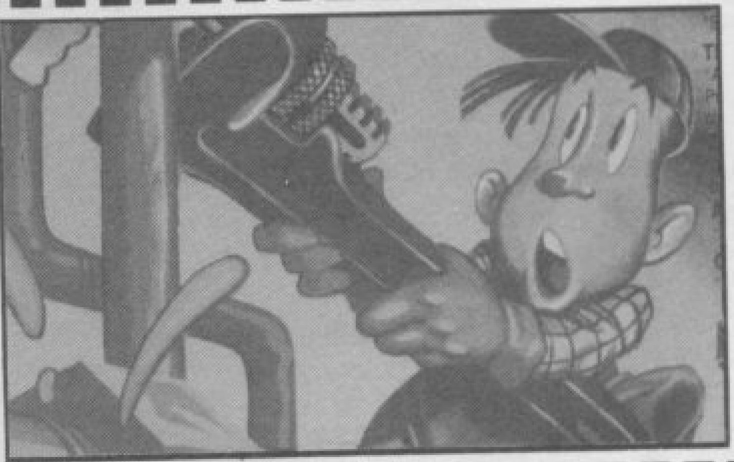
From now on, most of our coupons, compos and letters will be contained in this pull-out section. So you don't need to cut up your lovely issues any more!

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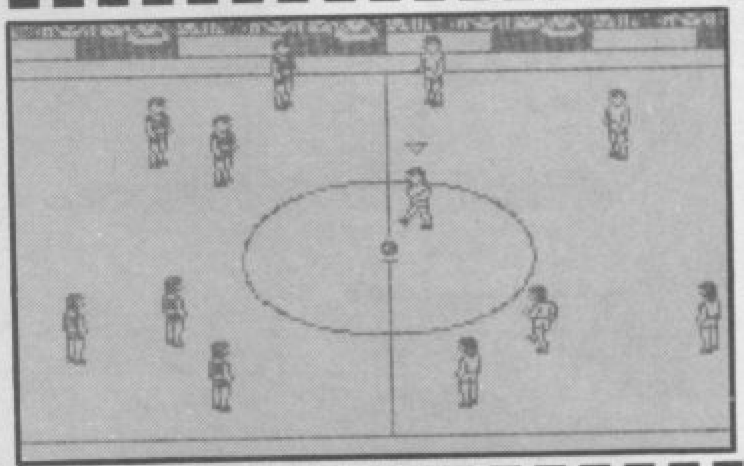
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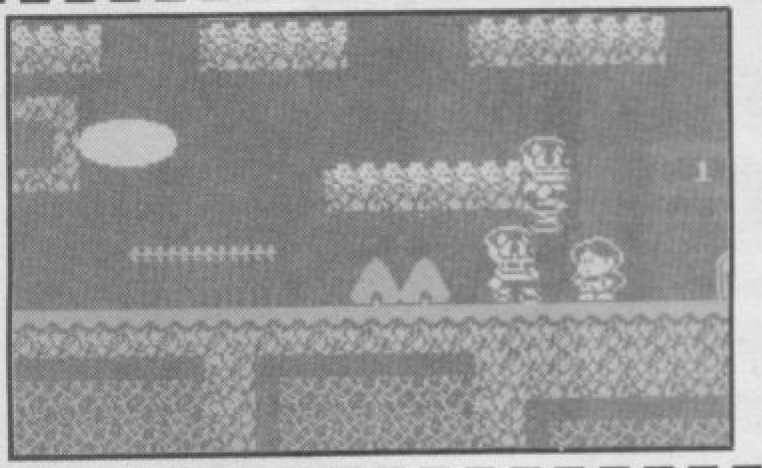


SMASH SMASH SMASH OFFER OFFER OFFER

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RAINBOW ISLANDS

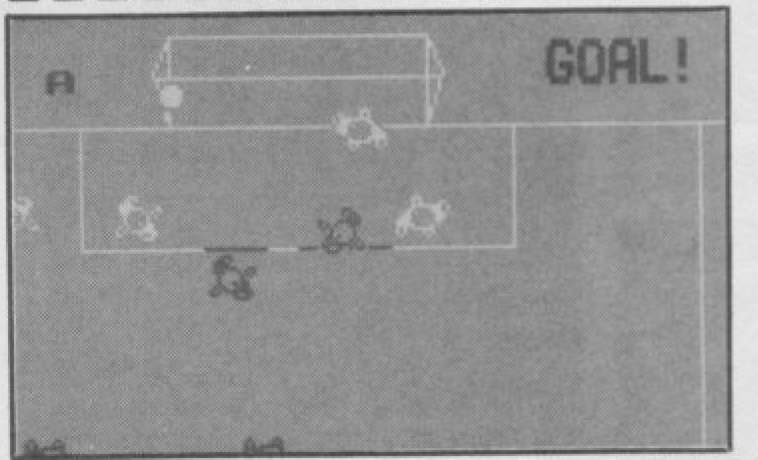
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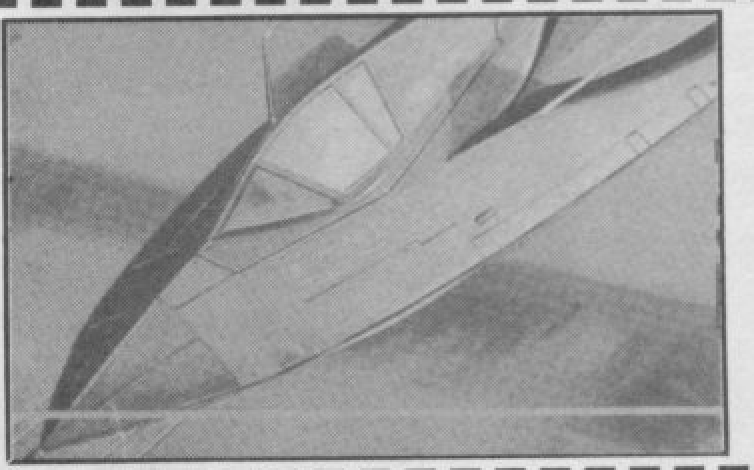
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TELL IT TO JIM

COUPE CODE

Dear Jim, I have a great program for all you Sam Coupe owners who also own Speccies. This is what you do.

First save your Speccy rom on a blank cassette by switching on your Speccy and typing in - save "ROM" code 0,16384. Then when you've done that switch your Speccy off and put your Sam Coupe on. Then type in this program.

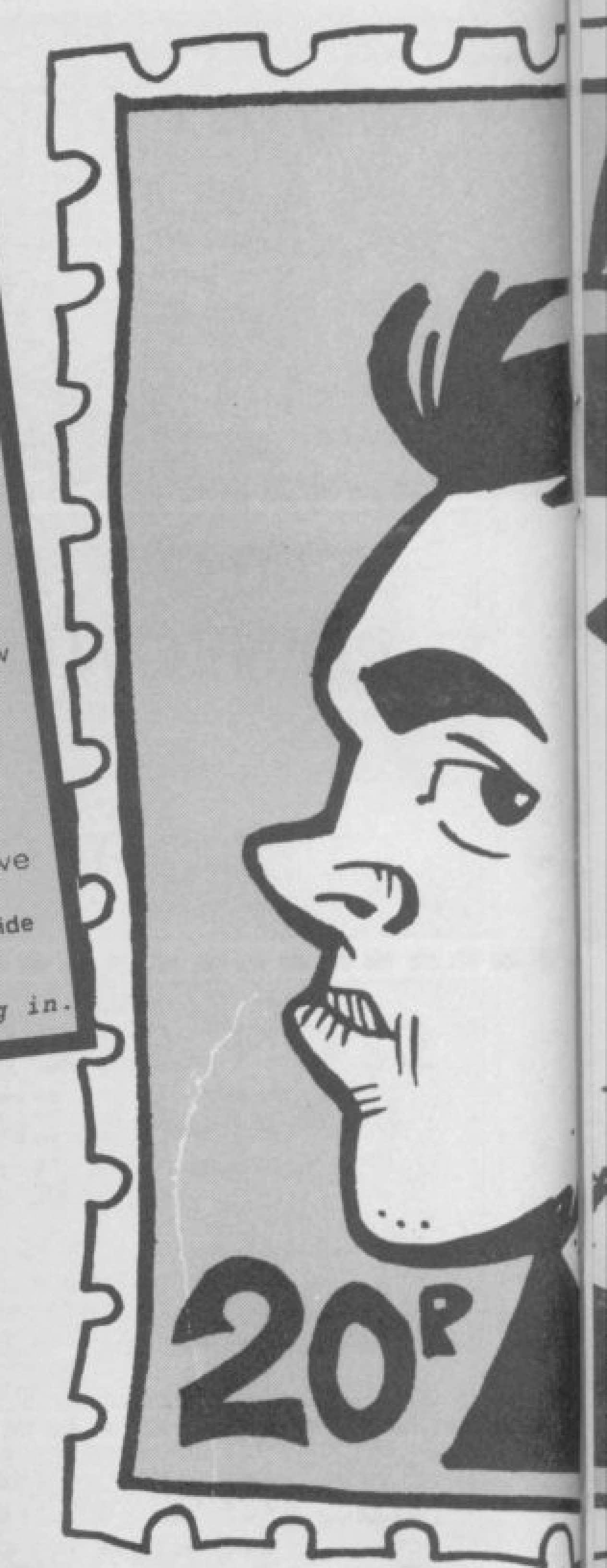
```
10 REM Kevin Millingtons Rom program
20 Clear 49999: LOAD""CODE 65536
30 For A=50000 to 50008
40 Read N: Poke A,N
50 Next A
60 CALL 50000
70 DATA 62, 163, 211, 250, 62, 4, 211, 252, 199
```

Run it and then load in the Speccy Rom and then hey presto. You've got a Speccy built into your Sam, and now nearly all your Speccy games will work on your Coupe. If you want to change the Speccy colours type in Palette (then a paint pot, 4 eg. then a colour 99, eg). You must label this line 25.

Jim, please leave my full address, as I would love to have a few Sam Coupe pen pals.

Kevin Millington 28 Heswall Ave Clockface St Helens Merseyside WA9 4DR

● *Ooh Yes! Keep those Coupe letters rolling in.*



MORE STRATEGY, OR ELSE

Dear Jim, I have been reading SU for well over a year now, and I have noticed the lack of reviews of strategy games. Is this because there are not many strategy games on the market or because you generally "steer clear" of this type of software.
Either way, I would like to see more reviews of strategy games, if at all possible.

Oliver Hurley Lydney, Glos

● *We've got no policy to avoid strategy games. We try to cover all the main releases each month. Inevitably, a mainstream game available in loads of shops will get more space than a limited interest mail-order title.*

I'VE ENCLOSED A PICTURE

Dear Jim, I have enclosed a picture from a leaflet. The man with the machine gun is the exact some one as on the cover of Operation Thunderbolt.

Please print this letter as I don't think anybody else has noticed it.

Gordon Watson, Dumfriesshire, Scotland

● *My word. Any other image similarities out there?*



SOME HOT INFO

Dear Jim, I am replying to the letter from Ahmed in Issue 95 (February). I am a member of the Home Computer Club in Swindon. Their address is: The Home Computer Club Swindon X SN99 9XX

Remember to state which kind of computer you have.

Yours sincerely Miss Angharad Williams Amlwch, Gwynedd





SHOW-OFFS CORNER

Dear Show-Offs Corner, So far you've had some pretty mediocre attempts at showing off. Such as some plonker completing New Zealand Story. I have completed no less than five games. It took me about a week to complete Double Dragon II, Ghouls and Ghosts, Myth, Hard Drivin' and Chase HQ! Now, if that doesn't warrant serious showing off then Y*** S******** is my fave mag. Well anyway, here's the proof.

When you complete Double Dragon II you get a congratulatory picture of a bloke in blue, a bloke in red and a woman in green, waving.

When you complete Ghouls n Ghosts the princess walks up and hearts float up the screen.

When you complete Myth you get amessage about time flowing back to normal. To kill Dameron you shoot his mouth, then eyes, then the optical nerves, then his brain.

When you beat the Phantom Photon on Hard Drivin' it says you won. While you are still driving a message says "congratulations, you are the new Hard Drivin champion".

Lastly, when you complete Chase HQ you get a scrolly message saying that what you have done will not be forgotten, then it shows you four digitised piccies of 3 blokes and a porsche.

Ta dah!!

Tom Bulstrode Loughbrough, Leics

LEAVE SU ALONE SIMON

Dear Jim, Just scrawling to complain about all that flannel Simon MacLean wrote back in issue 96.

He complains about letters being full of "meaningless drivel" - well let me tell you something Simon, it makes a hellava better read than your crap. Don't you think if the Letters page wasn't succeeding Jim would scrap it? Obviously, it is.

Simon complains that Emlyn Hughes International Soccer was received with "a negative attitude" - it got an SU Classic for Gawd's sake!!

If Simon was editor (thankfully, he's not) SU would have to change its style from humorous to deadly serious. Don't you see Simon, it's humour that makes SU good - it's what the readers want, something funny that draws their attention.

OK, so SU might not cater for what all the technical/adventure buffs want, but it does its best - nobody can ask for more than that. These people should look elsewhere...

So there... judging by SU's success and the amount of letters it has received congratulating them (including me) I would definitely say that SU makes a truly excellent read.

Cheers mateys.

Tommy Vanner County Antrim, N Ireland

● *Have a bundle of software, Mr Vanner.*

HEEELLPPPP!!!

Dear Jim, I have recently bought Double Dragon II (damn sight better than Double Dragon I). Garth Sumpter's review was mostly right.

When I got it home I loaded it. I started the first level, I completed it and Billy and Jimmy disappeared into the lift shaft. I fought another great level of baddie bashing but to my upmost horror the title screen appeared again with the message "cue tape, press fire". I thought, "hey, what's happening?". I followed the orders and it said "wrong file, please repeat". So I thought, what to do, and all I could think was to write to SU.

So, is this a human error or is this a fault with the game, or could it even be a fault with my +2A? Please help as I'm bewildered.

Neil Higgs Oadby, Leics

● *Try the B side of the tape for the extra level data.*

SELLTHROUGH JIM

Every month on this page, you can find all the answers to your Spectrum buying/selling problems. If you want to buy some classic games, get yourself a new joystick interface or even a replacement keyboard, this is the place to come. Take a look at what we've got on offer this month and see if anything appeals! Don't forget; if you want to shift any of YOUR unwanted games/peripherals in order to get the necessary readies for your next big games binge, this is the place! All games advertised in these pages must be sold in their original maunfacturers packaging or the adverts will not be accepted.

WANTED : PRINTER/'RACIN G LEAGUE'

The game has been out for ages but I can't get hold of it. I'm willing to pay a good price for it. Also a good working printer of which I'd like the asking price to be quoted. Write to:

Bryan Hurrell, 136 Pemdevon Rd, W. Croydon, Surrey CRO 33QP.

(It might have helped if you'd stated what sort of printer you're after)

FOR SALE : GAMES

I've got loadsa brill, cheap games for sale. they are for the 48K Spec.

For 50p - Terra Force (sorry mate, we couldn't read the next game, something about Chess?)

For £1 - Back Packers (part 1); Dark Star; Hellfire; Luna Atac; Spike; 3d Starstrike; Viking Raiders.

For £2 - BMX Racers; Footballer of the Year; Sinbad; Tower of Evil

For £2.50 - Euro 5 a-side Footy; Psystron; The Games (winter edition); Tir Na Nog.

For £3 - a compilation with Dreadnoughts; Panzer Attack; Red Baron; Paras.

If you want any of these write to: Eddy Horton, 22b High St, Nash, Milton Keynes MK17 OEP.

WANTED : 'NEW WHEELS JOHN?'

I would like either the above game by Automan U.K. or a compilation by the same company with this game on it. Please write with a price to:

Christopher Pearcey, 38 Carr St, Marsh, Huddersfield, W. Yorkshire HD3 4AU

FOR SALE : +3

If there's anyone out there who wants a Speccy +3 then please call (0604) 648094 between 4pm and 6pm on weekdays (except Thursday).

Mark Bowles (No address)

WANTED : PRINTER

I want a printer (+3 compatible) in return for these games: Vindicator; Fist +; Op Wolf; Grand Prix Collection; Predator; Maniacs Diary; Ice Palace; Impy Mission 2; PSI-S Trading Co; Express Raider; Leviathan; Martianoids; Breakthru; Crystal Castles; Driller; Captain Blood; Blockbusters; Krypton Factor Every Second Counts; Ikari Warriors; Side Arms; Thunderceptor; Fast 'N' Furious; Shackled; Mission Elevator; Desolator; Dizzy 3.

Write to: Neil Highley, 16 Park Ave, Concord, Washington, Tyne and Wear NE37 2QP.

SHIFT IT!

If you want to shift anything Speccy, this is the place to do it. All you have to do is fill in the form here and include a cheque/postal order for £5.00 made payable to Sinclair User.

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I'VE GOT THIS PROBLEM

PROGRAMMING PROBLEMS

Dear Dr. Rupe, I'm just putting the finishing touches to my own "shoot-'em-up". My problem is joysticks. I'm reading the keyboard by loading the BC register pair with the IO port addresses and checking their values. Will the same routine work for joystick control? What are the port addresses?
I can't afford to buy all the popular joysticks, so how can I check that my routines are working?

Justin Murphy Tipton, W. Midlands

•There are two standard joysticks in use with the Spectrum. The first is the one that Amstrad provide ports for on the +2/+3, and that looks to the computer just like the numbers on the keyboard. Joystick 1 is at address EFFEh, and the bits are 0=fire, 1=up, 2=down, 3=right and 4=left. Joystick 2, at F7FEh, is inverted,; 0=left, 1=right, 2=up, 3=down and 4=fire.
•The other popular joystick is the Kempston standard. This uses address 1Fh, but I no longer have the bit assignations to hand. However, you'll have to get one to check out your routines - there's no alternative to this - whereas you can use the keyboard to check the standard joystick code.
•Coo. Real programming. Next joystick jockey with a problem...

JOYSTICK WIRING HILARITY

Dear Rupe, I've got a problem with my son's Spectrum +2. It was bought as part of a games pack, with games, lightgun and an SJS2 joystick. Everything seems to run well, until I plug in the joystick. Then, not only does the joystick not work but the keyboard stops working too. I've tried another joystick, but it doesn't have any effect. It doesn't seem to matter which port I use, either. Any advise?

Dr LTJ Salmon Fleet, Hants

•Another doctor! Actually, I got my PhD from the University of Woolamaroo...
•I think you've got a wiring fault on the joystick sockets. It can't be the joystick, since you've tried another (was it an SJS series stick?). It can't be the circuitry of the computer, since the keyboard works normally. It might be the joystick chip (unlike the +3, where all that sort of thing is on one chip, the +2 has a separate chip for joystickery), but it's most likely to be the sockets. Whatever, take it back and get a new one.
•Next punter with faulty goods...

DOCTOR, DOCTOR, IT'S THE CURVEY LINES

Dear IGTP, I've had my +2 for a few weeks. The first one went back to the shop with a faulty keyboard, and I've now got one which works. It's still not perfect, though - on dark blue and black I get curved lines running across the screen all the time. The only way I can stop them is by turning the colour control on the TV right down, and that makes all the rest of the colours very pale.
Is it a problem with the Spectrum? What can I do about it?

DJ Tutton Bridgewater, Somerset

•That's an odd one, What I suspect might be happening is that the Spectrum is generating signals which the TV is confusing with the normal colour and picture ones. All Speccies do this to some extent, so it's either your TV which is too sensitive to them, or you've got a computer that's generating too high a level of this noise.
•What can you do? Plug the Speccy into a friend's TV, and see if the fault's still there. If it is - change the Speccy. If it isn't - change your TV (perhaps someone will swap one they only use to watch Young Doctors on...)
•Next blast from the past...

THE CUTTING EDGE

Dear Doc, I recently bought a second-hand microdrive and Interface 1 for my son's 48K Spectrum. At first, all was well, but occasionally the unit would refuse to CAT or LOAD, and just span away merrily until the power was pulled. Then it seemed to rectify itself, but recently it's got worse and now starts spinning for no good reason while we're playing a game.
Where does the fault lie, and where can I get it fixed?

MR Lewis Haywards Heath, W Sussex

•A number of faults can cause this. The first was an insufficiently-rated power supply that some 48K Spectra had; the additional load from the microdrive made it easier for mains spikes to get through and disturb the circuitry enough to cause the symptoms you describe. The cure is to get a higher rate PSU; many companies sell these. The second is bad connections between the Spectrum and the Interface 1; make sure the IF1 is screwed into the Spectrum as the manual described after cleaning the edge connector on the computer by rubbing it with a pencil eraser.
•If the above fail, then there's a problem probably within the Speccy, and that will need repairing by a specialist firm. Make sure you describe the symptoms to them fully before entrusting them with the computer and IF1, and that they agree they can fix it. Some don't deal with IF1 problems.
•Next odd idea...



BATMAN

Dear Garth, You'll probably be amazed to hear that I agree with you. 76% is more than enough for Batman.

Sure, the first impression of the game is excellent, but after a couple of days it becomes very boring and repetitive. The graphics are up to the usual Ocean standard, but where is the addictiveness? It is very like Robocop, but is much less addictive and hasn't got enough levels.

It is also like most Ocean games, a bit too easy (except for the last level, where you have to kill the Joker before he escapes up the ladder).

When I first played it I thought, "this is utterly fab!" But sadly, after extensive playing it isn't up to all the hype. Although this was Garth's first review he made a great job of it. Unlike other mags who play games for about 10 minutes before reviewing them.

Welcome to SU Garth. And well done SU for finding another first class reviewer.

Derek Brackett Kilmarnock, Ayrshire

BATMAN - THE MOVIE

Dear SU, I think the review of Batman was very accurate. I think 76% was a fair score, I would have give it around 85% myself.

The graphics are very well defined on each level, but I'm not over keen on level 3 which is a bit boring.

The difficulty level is just right, I have had the game for a couple of months, and have nearly completed level 4. In my opinion it is better than the Amiga version which my cousin has got.

My only gripe is that when you kill the Joker's henchmen on levels one and five, the animation sequence, when they drop off the platform, is the same as in Robocop.

And why did James McConnel spell Vicki Vale, Vicky? He corrected your spelling with an incorrect one himself.

Keep up the good work SU. I think Garth is a very good reviewer.

Pete Cullen Bournemouth, Dorset

BATMAN - THE MOVIE

Dear SU, I have just brought the world's most crap and boring game. What am I talking about? Batman - The Movie, of course. How the hell did it get 76%. The first and last levels are so easy with adequate graphics. The most anoying thing about these levels is teh amount of time it takes for Batman to get the batarang out and throw it. The Batmovile is so boring, Ocean would have been better off leaving it out, or if they absolutely had to put it in, the level would have been better viewed from behind. The Batwind would also have benefitted from being viewed from behiond, as you would have be able to judge where the balloons were with greater ease.

I found the level inside the Batcave so crap, I won't say anything else about it. My marks would have been:

Graphics 33 65 Sound 75 Playability 59 Lastability 12 Overall

Kieran Miles Daventry, Northants

EMLYN HUGHES INT SOCCER

Are you mad. Only 91% for a game which is mega wicked, the scrolling is so smooth, the way you head a ball is fab, slide tackles are excellent and the way you run to the crowd after scoring a goal is brill.

The range of options is bigger than the amound of bruises on your face after I've finished with you (which is quite a lot).

This game should have got 100% and a double classic.

Daniel Hammond Gleadless, Sheffield

THE Write Stuff.

So, you think that Jim can't tell the difference between rad and raddish. Is Garth really as mad as everyono thinks or does he actually know what he's doing? Is Chris 'Mr Hateful' Jenkin's really fair with his marks? Tell the world what YOU think of the reviews and the reviewers. If your letter's published you'll get a designer SU badge and the best letter of the month will be awarded £20 of software chosen by Jimbo himself. Send you letters to: The Write Stuff, Sinclair User, Proiry Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

CHASE HQ

I am writing to tell you Chase HQ is nifty, fab, brill etc. I liked the trendy bit where the man puts the light on the roof of the car.

The speech is excellent (just like Americans) and the playability is perfect. I've won after two weeks with no pokes or cheats and to prove it the message at the end is:

This is Nancy at Chase HQ - I would like to congratulate you for your heroism and bravery. You will be remembered for a long time to come.

I agree with your review, that Chase is the best driving game ever.
Paul Wilson Blackburn, Lancs

CHASE H.Q.

Blimey, cor lumme! You certainly got this one right. Chase HQ ruddy well deserved 96%. The graphics are sooo slick that I nearly mistook my Speccy +2 for an arcade machine.

The synthesised speech in 128K is excellent, and the speed is just unbelievable. Ocean even made a good job of the 48K version, with the title tune and the odd sound effect.

I wouldn't say the game is too easy or too hard, I think it has the same playability as the coin-op. I have been playing Chase ever since I got it for Chrimbo, and can get to stage three. If you're looking for an excellent bash-'em-up, I recommend Chase HQ.
Stephen Williams Ayrshire, Scotland

MYTH

Why have you not reviewed this game yet? It is so mega fab it's unbelievable. Y*** S******* gave it 95%!! This mark is nowhere near high enough. The variety in the levels is wicked, such as 'The road to hell', 'Greece four hundred BC', 'Scandinavia in 500AD', 'Egypt 3000BC'. The graphics are full colour and they are bloody brilliant. Much better than any ST or Amiga game I've seen (well almost). But for the Speccy it's absolutely mega!! The end of level baddies are mega wicked and are so slick. I think System 3 are being ripped off only charging £10 for it.

I reckon the fax box would look like this:

Grahics	97%
Sound	90%
Playability	97%
Lastability	98%
Overall	98%

If you haven't bought it, then buy it!
Darren Old Oscott, Birmingham

● ***Daz, you've gone squiffy. Check out the review on page 111 of the December 89 issue.***

SUPER WONDERBOY

Er, umm, yes, well, As ha ha har. It was a joke, wasn't it? Yes of course it was. To tell you the truth Garth, you're mad only giving poor Tom Tom 90%. This deserves at least 99.9% and a double SU Classic. This game is well RAD. With the shops, pubs and the doors you go in and fight a nasty baddie.

If you get to the Sphinx he asks you what he had for his dinner, it's chicken.

Garth, you are crap getting killed by that complete and utter potato head on round 3. I recommend that you buy this game as it's well worth the money.
Matthew Jones South Hiendly, Barnsley
P.S. SU burns the Y-fronts off Crash and YS.

OPERATION WOLF

Jim was meant to be a good reviewer, but for this one he must have gone off his head. 90% for a crummy game like this. I would give it no more than 2% for the Spectrum. The arcade version is brill, at least it has more than just one colour on each screen. The graphics are as bad as the ones on Crazy Cars. Here are my ratings:

Graphics	5%
Sound	2%
Playability	5%
Lastability	1% (it broke the second day I had it)

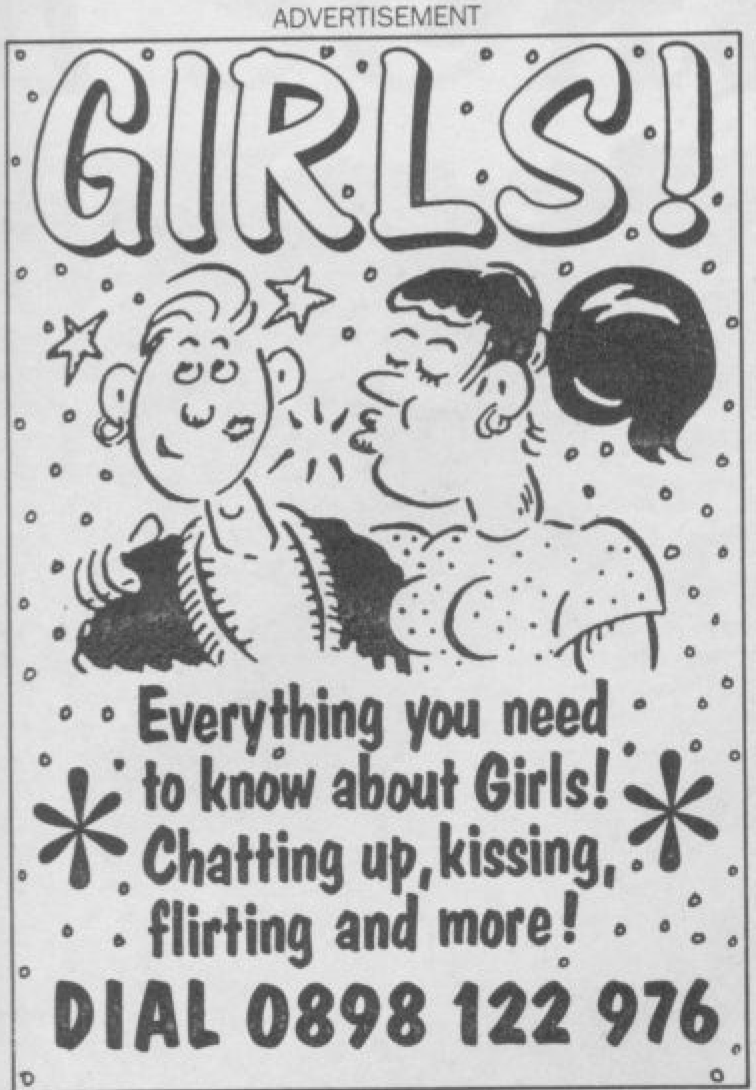
I got past all the levels. Airport, Forest etc on my first go!! It was easy. The last thing about the game was the big gun on the arcade machine. It weighs 10 tons. Why can't they have a nice light one. I am disappointed in Op Wolf, it is a BAD game.
Gareth Emery Southampton, Hants

● ***You're clearly bonkers (and a year out of date).***



MONTY... THE STORY CONTINUES
CLICK
FRAZZLE
To Monty's delight, he hadn't been turned into a McMole Burger, but he soon realised his whole appearance had changed. No more was he a tubby mole. He now sported a muscular body and was dressed in a trendy blue outfit with a red cape.
!
FIZZLE
The aliens hussled Monty to the Teleporter.
We have given you our sacred Super Powers and you have 24 hours to master their usage. Use them wisely!
Super Powers! From a fat lazy mole to a Super Mole. No problem!
GULP!
THUD
Monty's maiden flight was a disaster. Then again I don't suppose Super Man got it right first time!
I suppose I must have super strength as well!
HI YAH!
WAP
A voice booms from the sky:
Let's hope I don't have too many coconut trees to fight!
You obviously need a little help! You will have many weapons at your disposal during your travels. Take care when you use them. I will now tell you your quest.
WILL MONTY LIVE UP TO THE ALIENS' EXPECTATIONS... or are they trying to make a mountain out of a mole?
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TH



Greetings, mortals. Once again the Academy is in the grip of a storm, wind howling around like a demented banshee and rain lashing against the windows. People tell me that it's all down to something called the Greenhouse Effect, and that things are only going to get worse before they get even more worse. If the Greenhouse Effect IS to be blamed, then they should stop building Greenhouses, that's what I say. Tackle the bull by the horns, get to the heart of the matter,m and solve the problem immediately.

Solving problems immediately is something that we are all, as adventurers, keen to do as often as possible. Not always easy, I know, and so let me throw a couple of new Spectrum adventures at you and give youy all a few more problems to try to get through.

The first one is called *Once Upon A Lily Pad.* Now Iknow I have, in the past, turned the odd mortal into a frog. It's in my nature, that's all. One of my frogs though, seems to have strayed into this game from the modestlynamed Global Games. In fact, at the start of the game, you are a frog.

Not that you want to be a frog, however, and to quote the game you are in real life a "terribly hunky prince cursed to live a froggy existence by an ugly old witch in a fit of pique". The aim of the game is to return to your human form, and to do that you need to find a princess, don't you? So, "little froggy knapsack on your back, you hop off into the adventure".

This is a PAWed game, with all the features that you would expect from such a thing, and it has some wonderful location descriptions and responses to various inputs. The first major problem that you're going to have to solve revolves around the fact that after about 10 or so moves an irate father frog turns up with a shotgun and demand s that you marry a frogess know as sally. This is effectively the end of the game, as you hop off out of it to settle down to a life of froggy wedded bliss.

This is not good enough, because being a frog isn't everything it's cracked up to be, and you're bound to want to find the princess, if only to avoid being married to Sally the frogess. The game plays well, it's funny, and it only costs £1.99 to experience life from a frog's point of view. Global Games are the people to write to for this 48K Speccy game, and Global live at 4 Kilmartin Lane, Carluke, Lanarkshire ML8 5RT.

The second game on the agenda is far removed from the land of frogs, because it's set on the Moon. Frogs, as far as I know, have not yet been found on the Moon, and according to *A Dark Sky Over Paradise*, the new game from Interactive Technology, they are not there in the 21st century. One day, perhaps, one frog will boldly hop where no frog has hopped before, but not in this game it won't.

Although the title *A Dark Sky Over Paradise* could refer to the current state of the weather surrounding the Academy, it in fact refers to the growing chaos surrounding makind's plans to establish new homes on the planets in order to provide living space for the rapidly expanding popula-

CROWN OF RAMHOTEP:

Show the scroll to the curator at the museum. He gives you an amulet on a gold chain to help you in your quest. You need to raise some money, so remove the chain from the amulet, thread the amulet on the piece of string and wear it on the string. You can then sell the chain to the jeweller. Be careful with the money you get for the chain, you have only just got enough for essentials. You must pay your hotel bill to get your case containing your car keys. You need to buy the rope, lamp and matches, leaving just enough to buy petrol for your car. Don't give the chocolate to the boy, the beads are useless and the chocolate is the only food you have to keep you from dying of hunger.

BULBO AND THE LIZARD KING:

To recruit a new member to your party, either HIRE, SELECT or CHOOSE. To dismiss a member of your party, just FIRE them. The donkey is down a dark alleyway to the southwest of the market place. To get it to accompany Bulbo, just TAKE HOLD OF ROPE. To pass the dragon, either KILL it or CURE it. To cure dragon just EXAMINE it when the donkey is with you and then SEARCH PACK to find the necessary items. To pass the rat in safety, return to the location with the boulder in it (NW from the dragon) and ROLL BOULDER... N.B. You can only do this after you have visited the rat.

HE SORCERESS

Stuck in a dungeon or helpless at the hands of fetid trolls? Write to The Sorceress SU Priory Ct, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU

tion of Earth. And we're only in the year 2062 AD. Gosh, I'll be Blankety Black years old by then, making Academies on the Moon, whoopee!

Back to the game. You, a mere citizen, have been summoned overnight to the Moon in order to sort out this chaos. The cost of the project has risen to a suitably astronomical level, the Earth is plunged into a deepening economic recession, and all sorts of trouble and strife is threatening this project. You will find characters galore that you're going to have to interact with (a nasty guard starts interrogating you fairly early on, for instance), including the wonderful Taskbots, a sort of slave robot with a weird and wonderful sense of humour. And if you thing that the fellow citizen you find in a room full of white coated people is going to help, well, unfortunately, he is on the brink of insanity. But, deal with him you must.

All good clean fun then, the Taskbots especially are highly recommended, and the whole package will set you back £4.99. For that you not only get the game, but also wealth of detail about it in particular and playing adventures in general, plus one or two other little goodies to brighten up your day. Available, as I said, from Interactive Technology, P.O. Box 146, Sheffield S13 7TY.

Occasionally I mention some of the fanzime that are around for adventures in general, all of which regularly feature Spectrum stuff. Aware of the the bad feelings surrounding the Mueller saga, some of you may have been unwilling to subscribe to any of these fanzines, perhaps fearing that they may suffer a similar fate and leave you out of pocket. Well, I can happily report that *Adventure Coder, Adventure Probe and Spellbreaker* are all still going strong and still coming out on time each month, and as Adventure Probe has now been around for almost four years I can't see it going anywher just yet.

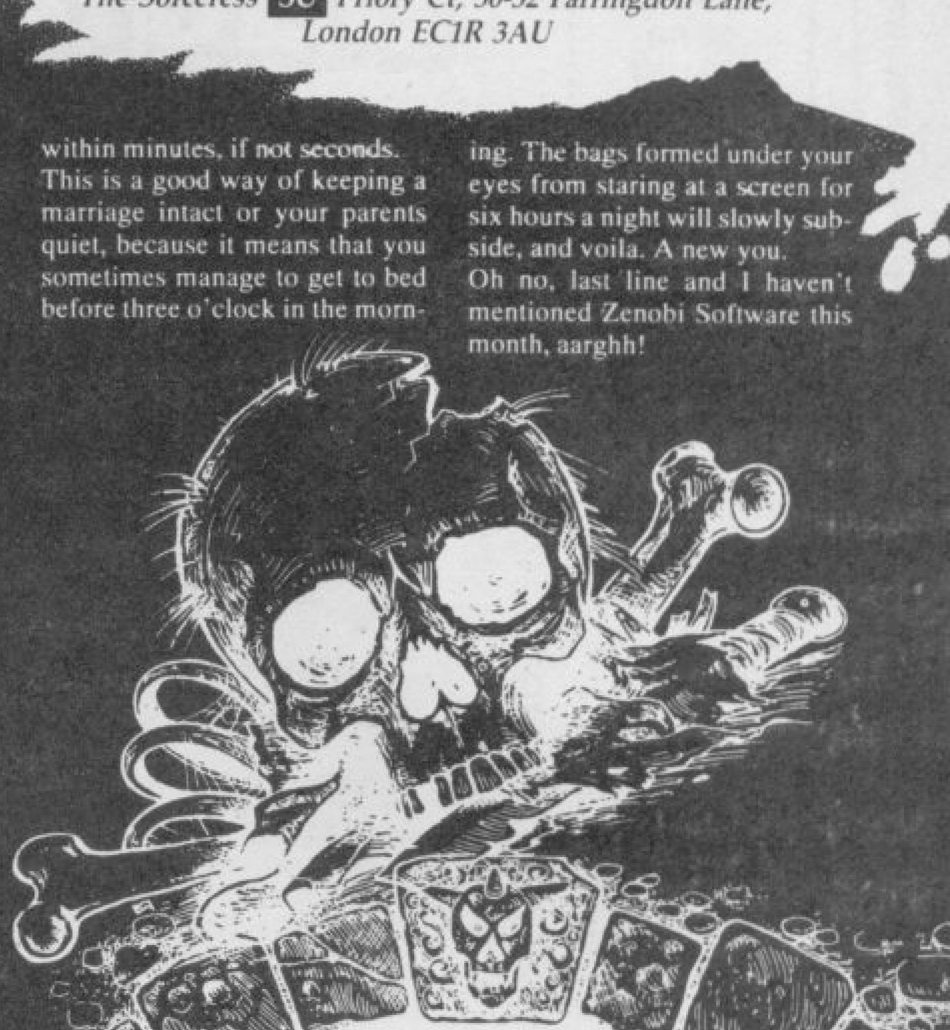
Adventure Coder (52 pages last issue), for the programmers amongst you, is available at £1 and issue or £12 for a year (some saving, eh?) from the cheerful editor Chris Hester. Cheques to him, at 3 West Lane, Baildon, Nr Shipley, W Yorkshire BD17 5HD.

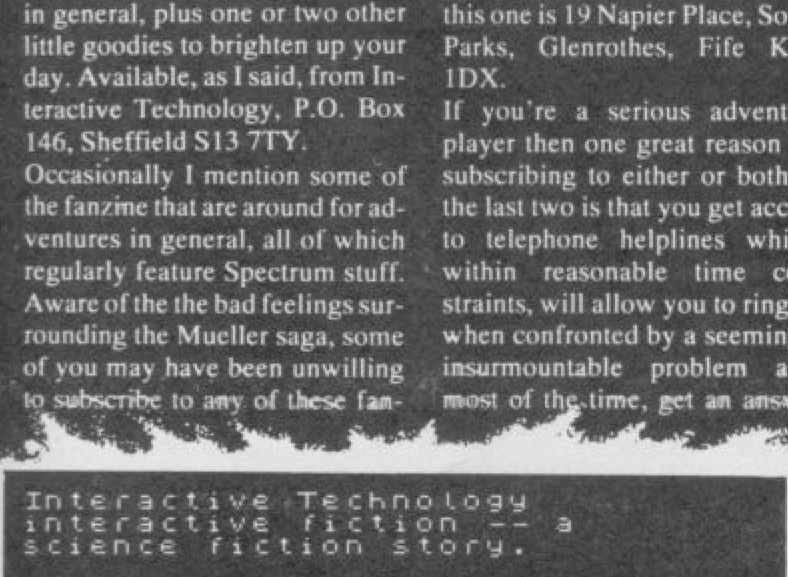
Adventure Probe (48 pages last issue), for the game players, is available at £1.50 and issue or £18 for a year (another great saving) from the Garfield-loving editor Mandy Rodrigues. The address heer is 67 Lloyd St, Llandudno, Gwynedd LL30 2BN.

Spellbreaker (40 pages last issue), another one for the game players, is available at £1.50 an issue or £18 for a year (why doesn't anybody do discounts?) from the gallant Scot know as Mike Brailsford. The address for this one is 19 Napier Place, South Parks, Glenrothes, Fife KY6 1DX.

If you're a serious adventure player then one great reason for subscribing to either or both of the last two is that you get access to telephone helplines which, within reasonable time constraints, will allow you to ring up when confronted by a seemingly insurmountable problem and, most of the time, get an answer within minutes, if not seconds. This is a good way of keeping a marriage intact or your parents quiet, because it means that you sometimes manage to get to bed before three o'clock in the morning. The bags formed under your eyes from staring at a screen for six hours a night will slowly subside, and voila. A new you.

Oh no, last line and I haven't mentioned Zenobi Software this month, aarghh!





WITTS END

MARIE CELESTE:

(from where we left off) get card, n, w, insert card, s, remove grille, e, e, s, get freezer, n, w, n, n, press button, u, n, w, w, n, e, n, get gloves, s, w, fire rifle, e, s, e, d, s, s, w, w, w, n, n, nw, wear gloves, open freezer, get ingots, put ingots in freezer, close freezer, s, s, w, w, e, u, n, e, drop freezer, w, n, w, s, get card, e, n, d, n, e, put hand through bars, insert card, get rope, n, s, u, fire rifle, press button, s, d, tie rope to cord, tie rope to rail, us, s, d, w, press button, n, n, n, get torch, w, w, press button, e, u n, n, press button ... finished next time.

THE CHALLENGE:

(from where we left off) north, in, exam cub, get cub, out, north, north, north, north, throw cub or drop cub, in, east, east, exam guard, get key, west, west, unlock door, drop key, in, exam cabinet, remove sack, get key from sack, unlock cabinet, exam cabinet, drop key, get sapphire, put it in sack, out, south, south, south, south, in, north, exam straw, search straw, drop sack, get arrow from sack, get sack, wear it, get bow, se, south, se, east. When reptile follows you - throw spear, south, sw, when pacheo appears fire arrow (must have bow and arrow), drop bow, drop sack, get medallion from sack, search pacheo, join halves, wear medallion, move body, get spear, get sack, up, south, south, south, south, south, sw, west, up, south, throw spear, south, south, south, south, south, south, west, in... and that's it.

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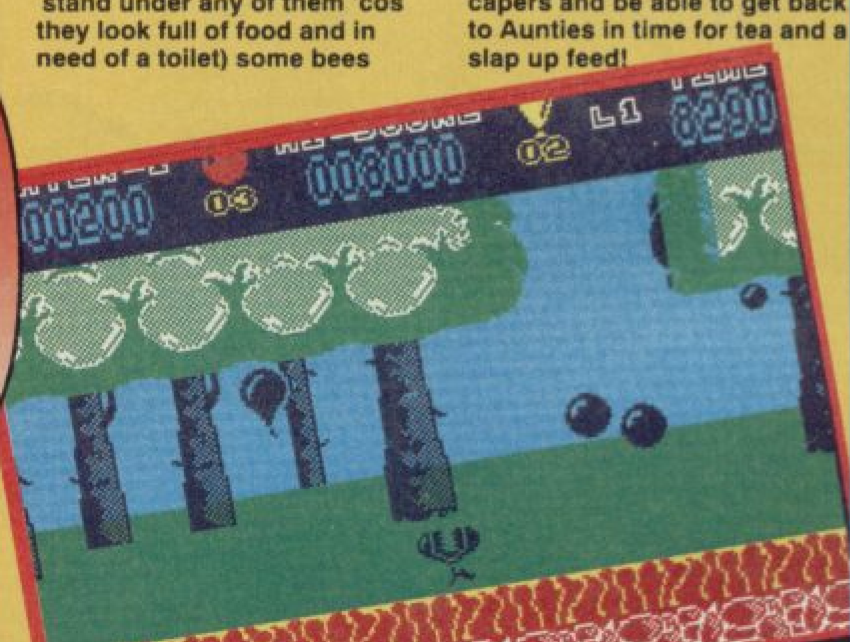
Eeek! Keep your balls out of the razor-toothed plant of death.

HOPPING MAD

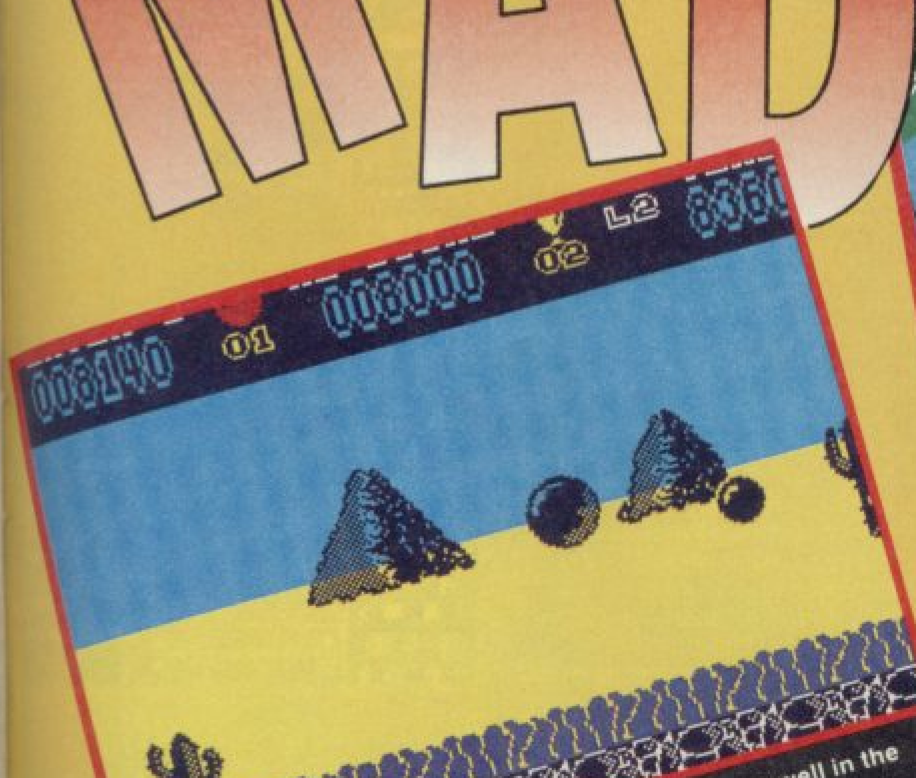
Leap, srroing, eeek! If I had to sum up a game in three words then this meagre trio of words could encapsulate the whole ethos of Hopping Mad. But would anyone want to buy a game that could be summed up so easily? My guess is that they wouldn't but let's have a look at it anyway...

Four balls bounce across the screen from right to left in a line (looking like a disjointed and it's your task to guide them as they sproing on their way by speeding up their progress, slowing them down and using the fire button to make them all bounce higher. So far, so bad but wait, what's that in the distance? Is it a plot, is it a game, no you daft bugger it's just some gnashing plants, some fat birds (I'd hate to stand under any of them 'cos they look full of food and in need of a toilet) some bees who mayor may no have been playing with the birds, some cacti, hedgehogs and a load of big balls, all of which prove fatal if a ball catches them. Loose a life and one of your balls blows up (coff, chortle). Points you have to get by collecting balloons and apples.

Well that's it. There's not much to the game and so I'm going to have the problems of a one-armed weight lifter with an itchy bottom to write much more about it. Apart from the fact that I could tell you about the smooth scrolling, the okay graphics, the ease of gameplay and the mind-boggling boredom of it all. But I won't. I'll just say that Encore have enough good games on their budget label to sink a small wooden boat so either go and find one of them (Buggy Boy, Paperboy etc) or just go out and sink a small wooden boat. You'll have far more fun and capers and be able to get back to Aunties in time for tea and a slap up feed!



Collect the balloons for extra points, but time that bounce with care!



Down to a paltry single ball. And all doesn't bode well in the arid head of the desert (banal or what?)

SCORES

Graphics	75
Playability	69
Sound	75
Lastability	56

OVERALL 69%

Leap, sproing,eek yourself to boredom with one of Encore's worst releases.

*Label:*Encore Price:£2.99

GARTH SUMPTER

REVIEW

CAS MAS

Who ever said that adventures and strategy games are boring? Not everybody is a brainless joystick junkie and Impressions have spent some length of time getting it all ready to unlease on a suspecting public. And although I've a fairly suspictious nature myself, I think it's a great game.

Castle Master puts you in the leggings (or stockings if you're really pervey) of a prince or princess who must search the Castle to rescue your twin brother (or indeed spaccy old sister). There are no specific locations and you move freely around the landscape, at either a walk, run or even a crawl depending on your stamina. You begin outside the castle and must gain entrance by getting the drawbridge lowered. It's a little tricky to get it open but it's better than throwing bricks at a blank wall. Also, there are cryptic hints littered around that may help you in your quest.

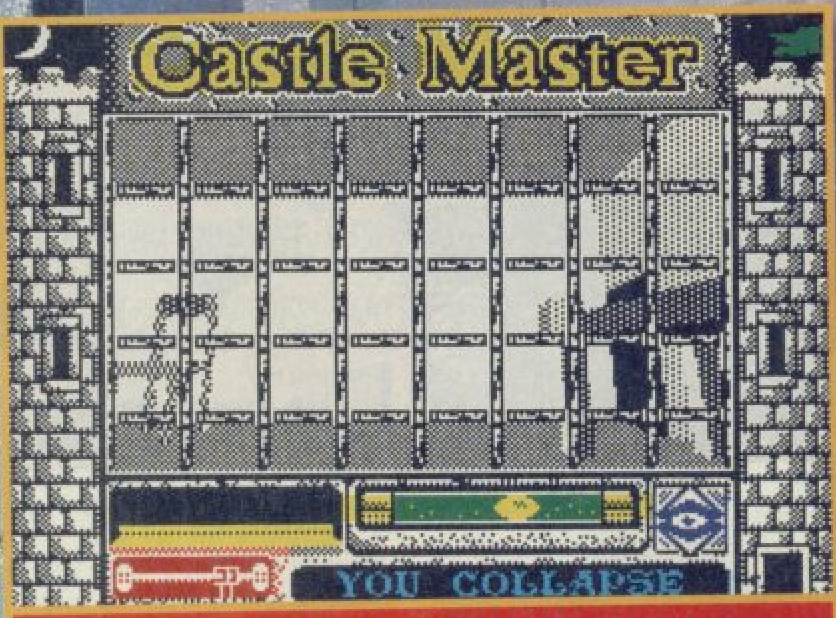
Movement is by joystick and keyboard or just keyboard (for those of you who want to build up your finger muscles) and you move forward and backward with left and right spinning the view around. There is a small sight in the centre of the screen which shows where (or what) you're heading towards.

If you like your adventures short on use of the keyboard then Castle Master is as easy as most with only the A key used for actions like eating, drinking, opening, collecting and so on and R, W and C used for Run, Walk and Crawl. The space bar toggles the pointer mode on and off and is used when throwing rocks via the fire button or 'actioning' something.

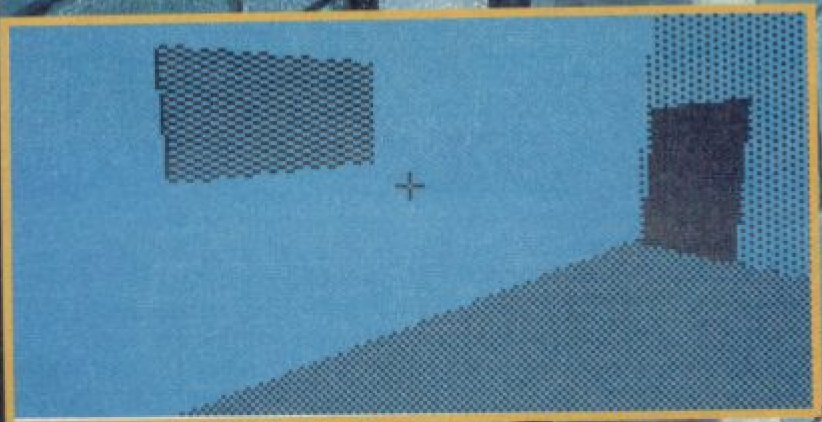
The keyboard controls also allow you to change the angle of your perspective. "Cor, that's just what I've always wanted a new perspective" and that's just what the P and L keys do, P looking up (useful when there are girls walking upstairs) and L drops your head down (useful when you're caught looking up girls skirts).

The graphics are a little on the slow side, no doubt the product of having to move the screen with each player movement, but then if you want a fast arcade game then Castle Master isn't for you. You need brains and reasonable reactions - the brains to work out the various puzzles that are contained in the game and reactions when you enter a room occupied by a spook. The screen will flash and your stamina will begin to drop. You must find the spook, hit the space bar and then move the crosshair sight onto it and press fire to despatch the spectre with a few well-aimed rocks.

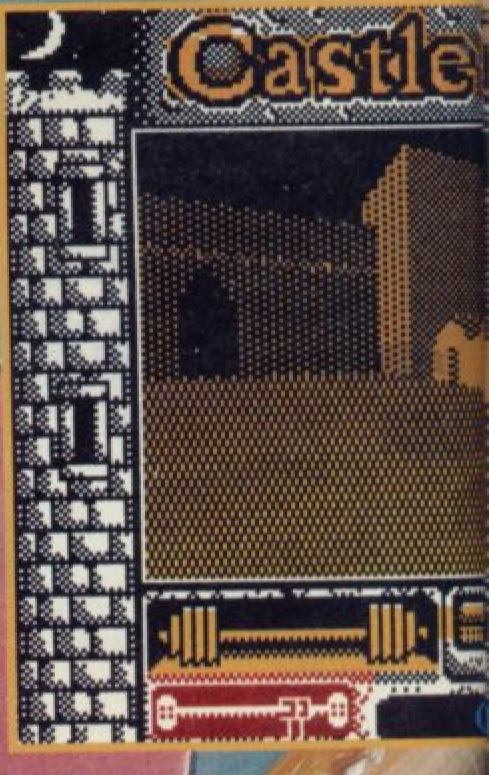
There is a definite movement in software to include a little bit of adventure or strategy into aracade games at the moment with selectable weapons and\or shops as in Super Wonderboy. The flip side of this is adventure games that work graphically and Castle Master is one of this genre and a good example of such. The game has depth, action sequences and is littered with puzzles and should be enough to keep hardened adventurers going for some time. The only real criticisms would be that the screen update is slow and the graphics are sometimes not immediately clear but all the whingin' and whinein' in the world should not serve to deter the average Spectrum gameplayer from what is an excellent adventure.

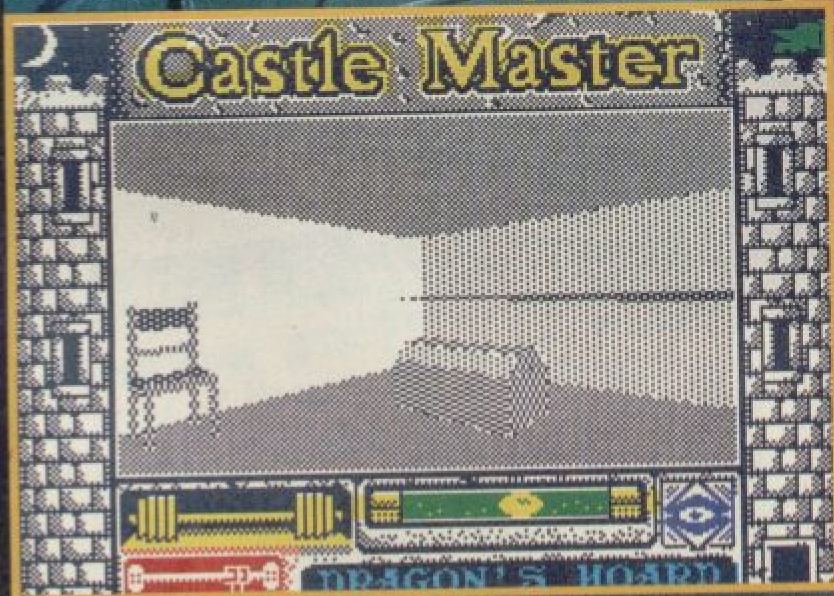


Run out of energy and the portcullis closes on your adventure.









STLE
STER



REVIEW

SCORES

80	OVERALL 81%	Would have been stronger with more depth of character control.
76		
77		
87		

GARTH SUMPTER

KNIGHT

Try not to let your spirits drop too much when you hear the plot of this one; brave knight must travel through dangerous lands in search of the four pieces of a mystic amulet which will allow him to defeat the evil sorceror who holds captive the king's beautiful daughter... yuuuch! The plot may be the most unoriginal in the world, but fortunately this isn't yet another arcade adventure. Instead it's yet another martial arts game...

Your task is to aid time-travelling superknight Fair Storm (who obviously needs all the help he can get, with a nancy boy name like that). Starting from the mystical dolmens of Splarg, he has to travel through time and space and hack into submission four loads of baddies; Cro-Magnon men in prehistory, gang thugs in modern-day New York, futuristic robots, er, in the future, and mystical weeblies in some magical dimension.

The backgrounds and characters look fabulous; the characters are big, gorgeously detailed and fairly smoothly animated. Unfortunately they do tend to merge into the monochrome backgrounds when they're not moving, as you can see from the screenshots. As for the rest of the display, you have the obligatory power meters for yourself and the baddies (all of whom must be put



Prepare to combat the dreaded "Z" shapes from beyond time. Keep your sword up or you'll end up like the lad atop the pole.





DR DOOM'S REVENGE!

Comic fans rejoice! Spider-Man and Captain America are teamed together for the first time (on a computer at least) in this latest adaptation from the famous Marvel Comics universe, Doctor Doom's Revenge.

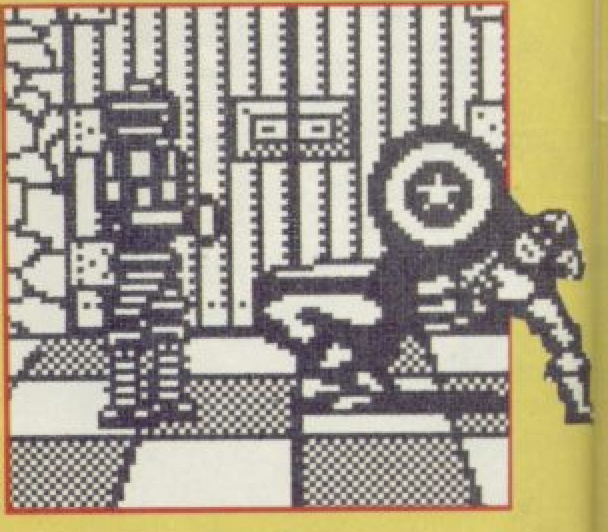
Doc Doom, who you secretly probably want to win anyway, has pinched a nuclear missile and is threatening to detonate it over New York. Spidey and Cap, as you are informed in the colourful accompanying booklet comic, have teamed up after a chance encounter with a gang of bankrobbers, and, since the Fantastic Four and the Avengers are having the weekend off, it's up to our two heroes to break into Doom's castle, duff up his assortment of super-goons and save the day.

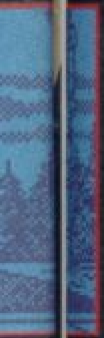


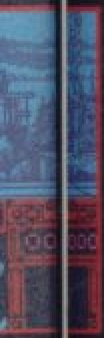








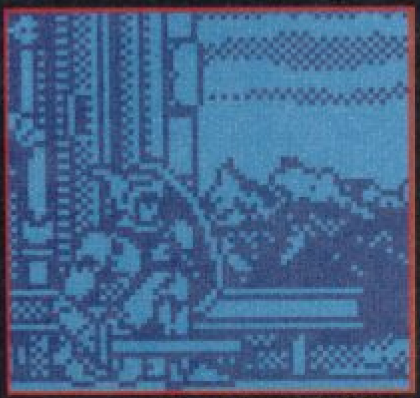




T FORCE

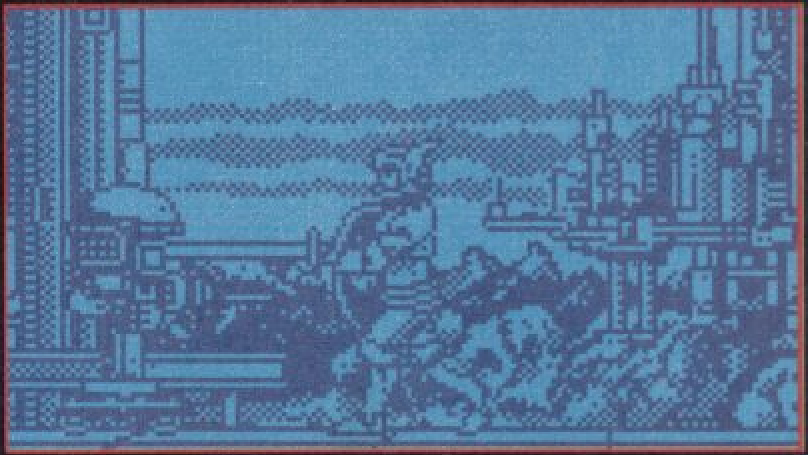
to the sword before you get to load the next level), and indicators for the number of amulet pieces collected and the time remaining.

Now, the testing point of any martial arts game is whether the fighting movements available are exciting and useful. In Knight Force, they ain't. Apart from the non-combative moves (walk, duck, jump) all you get is Downward Thrust (Left/right), Side Thrust (left/right) and Up Thrust. The side thrust is to take out flying objects such as robot springs, the up thrust skewers passing reptile-birds, and the downthrust - well, I don't know. It didn't seem any use at all to me, but then nothing seemed to work against the killer robots in the futuristic level, so I never got past them. In any



case, one poke of your mighty weapon seems to dispatch most of the flying baddies, so it isn't so much a combat game, more a pig-sticking exercise.

I'm sure there's a good game in here somewhere... perhaps it's tucked away in a dark corner of the box. But it just won't come out to play.



SCORES

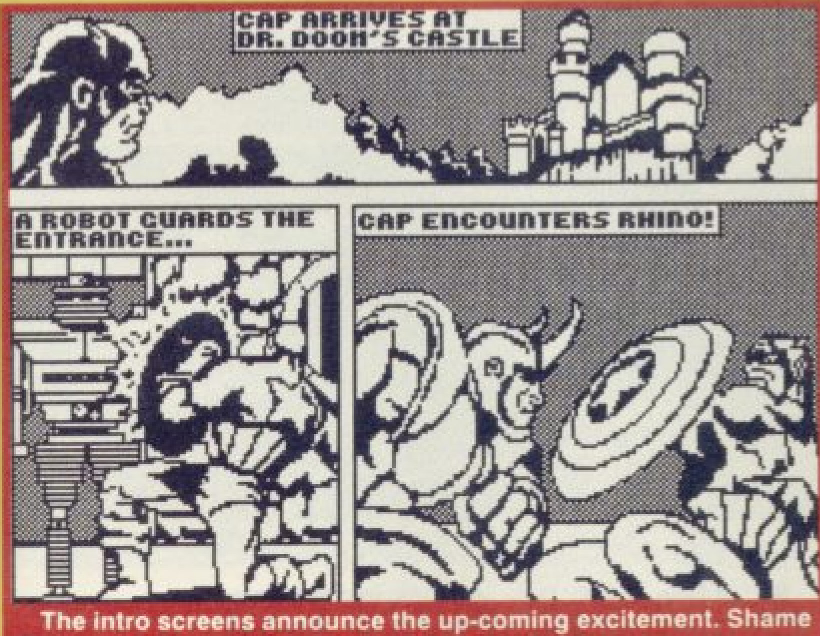
73
69
56
55

OVERALL 59%

Adventure plot, martial arts action, not much cop.

Titus. £8.95

CHRIS JENKINS



The intro screens announce the up-coming excitement. Shame the rest of the graphics aren't of this standard.

Trouble is, while this might have been an excuse for all sorts of platforms-and-puzzles malarkey a la Batman, what the game actually consists of is a series of combat scenarios interspersed with comic-style introductions - Cap meets Rhino, Spidey meets Electro, ho-hum.

This wouldn't be all bad, but the backgrounds are poorly drawn, the characters are very messy (looking as if they've ben designed with the digital equivalent of a pen with a bent nib), and the animation is something to be ashamed of. When Cap leaps over the head of a guardian robot, you can practically count the frames of animation as he jerks through the air.

That said, the combat sequences are quite challenging; you have to determine which moves work best to sap your opponent's power, and the fighting moves available change according to your distance from your enemy - shield throw, high kick, web cast and so on (Spidey, incidentally, has a limited number of webs to work with). For instance, in fighting a guardian robot, get as far away from him as possible and just keep flinging your shield - this will soon put enought dents in his tin head to p[ut him out of action (at which point Cap does a pansy little dance of triumph). The same tactic won't work with Rhino, though, 'cos he just keeps up close to you and butts you senseless, at which point you get the worst end-title screen I've ever seen in my life - a screen full of orange and yellow dots captioned "what ney York looked like after the superheroes failed." Hah!

It's good fun seeing some of your favourite baddies, such as Hobgoblin and Electro, coming to computerised life, but overall this is a very stale idea, not very well executed. "FOOOOM!", as Stan Lee would probably have said.

SCORES

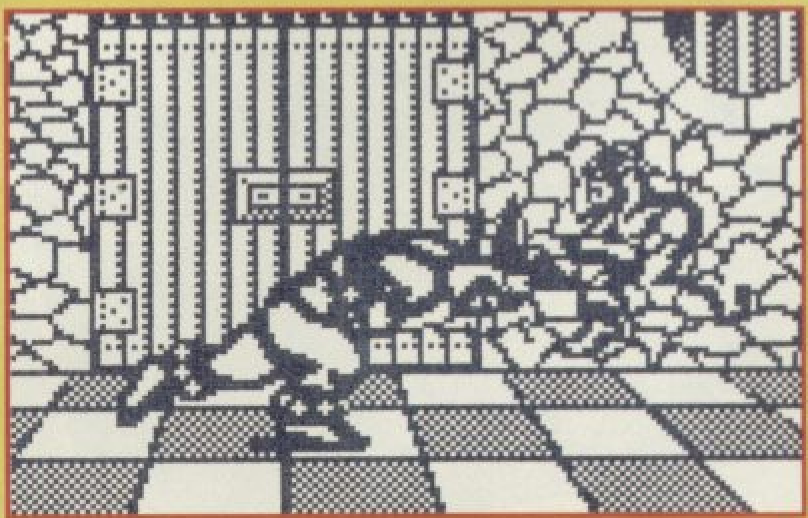
70
71
68
67

OVERALL 68%

Comic-strip style combat concoction which doesn't quite click.

Titus. £8.95

CHRIS JENKINS





MARVEL LAND - NAMCO

Well, there's on thing that Sega know how to do - and that's quite cutie. Wonderboy was cute, as was Super Wonderboy and Monsters' Lair, the latter to be remembered ever more for the cross eyed parrots which fired beach balls at you. But mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the cutest of them all? That particular award has to go to Marvel Land. Controlling this girlie cartoon character you jumpo and frolic around a landscape of pastel colours, jumping on top of gobilns and giving nastiy green coloured turtles a jolly good telling off. This is the kind of game that Mary Whitehouse wants us all to play - but none the worse for that. Check it out, and don't forget to tickle it under the chin after you've finished.





FAXBOX

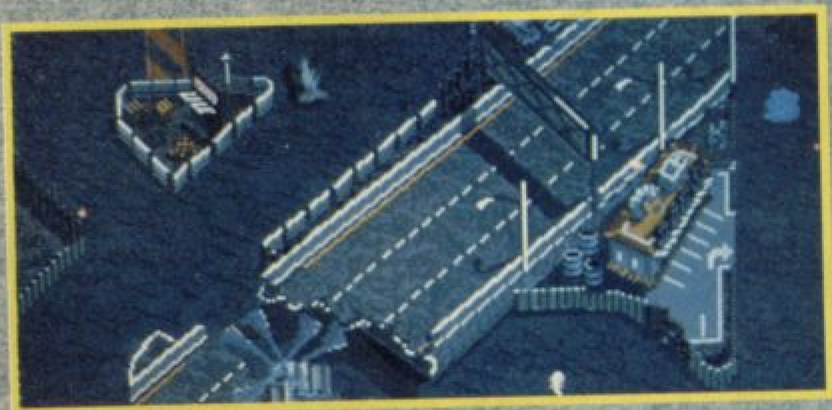
Graphics 8 Sound 7
Gameplay 8 Addictiveness 7
Cutie Mario style of game which has a curious attraction. Well worth the investment of a few 10p's.
OVERALL 7

BADLANDS - ATARI GAMES

Did ya like Super Sprint? Yeah! Did ya like Champion Super Sprint? Yeah! Do you like Badlands? Errrrr, well, not that much actually. Why? Well, it's a case of, to paraphrase that old axiom, "same ship new package". At least I think that's what the old axiom is. OK. This is it, right? Badlands is a top down racing game, with you - the Player - being able to see the whole of the track. You, plus a mate is you like, grab hold of the steering wheels and press down hard on the accelerator and zoom away, just like in the other Sprint games..with one difference. This time you can zap away to your heart's content.



Normal bullets come out of yer bonnet and these will slow down the opposition and make their steering go a bit wonky. If you are really good, however, you can save up some



AIR BLASTER - NAMCO

Mmmmmm. there are some games where, the moment you start to have a play, you get a feeling of deja vu. Have I not - you think to yourself - played something frightening similar before? In the case of Air Blaster, you may well find yourself saying - yes, I think this is a bit like Thundercross. Now, this is not necessarily a bad thing. Thundercross was/is a completely wonderful game. If it asked me nicely, I would indeed have its children. But Air Blaster is neither a follow up, or a direct rip off. If anything, it feels like a prequel, with similar but slightly inferior graphics and gameplay that doesn't quite match up. It's still a good blast, with billions of sprites that



As Andrew Marvell wrote only 300 years ago - "Now is the month of Maying and merry lads are playing" - Ooeer...out with those 10 florin pieces boys and get ready for action.

spanners and get missiles that blow people up. Now - I know that this sounds exciting -but, well, when you get down it playing it, it just isn't. In this format of game, the blasting just gets in the way of



things and other than a set of new graphics, the game offers nothing new on from all the previous Atari Sprint variants.

FAXBOX
Graphics 8 Sound 7
Gameplay 7 Addictiveness 6
Rehash of Super Sprint idea, with shooting throw in for good measure.
OVERALL 7

SUPER MASTERS GOLF - SEGA

Super Masters - just for the record - uses the same System 24 hardware as things like Crackdown and Scramble Spirits. But it's a whole lot better than both of them put together - if you like that sort of thing. It's a golf simulation - but if that sounds a bit boring, suffice to say, perhaps, that it's the best yet. The control system is easily understood and quite elegant, using some custom controls rather than trying to stick to a joystick and two fire buttons. Graphically, it can't be faulted. Before you attempt the hole - and when the ball is in the air - you get to see a perspective scrolling "side on" preview of the hole. When attempting a shot, you have a view from directly dehind your player, except when you are on the green, when you have a static perspective view. OK - this is not going to get the adrenaline racing around the circulation system - but it's one hell of a golf game, and if you are at all into this sport, then it's a must.

FAXBOX
Graphics 9 Sound 8
Gameplay 9 Addictiveness 8
Best golf game in the arcades right now - what more can you say!!!
OVERALL 8





PINBALL

Ever wanted to be in the movies, huh? Well, this might be your big break - in "Lights, Camera, Action" from Gottlieb.
Now Gottlieb seem to have a hardcore of fans that find their tables great fun to play. Us? Well - we can take them or leave them - but LCA is far from being a bad table and has some neat effects latched on to a reasonable playfield.

Based on the theme of the Movie Business, the feature you are most likely to come across is the reaction test - the "Gunfight". You start this sequence when the ball is trapped in a well in the upper playfield. Then you have to pay attention to the backboard, which depicts a gunfight scene in a detective movie. You are the smooth guy on the left - and there is a monster of a villian on the right. "Ready, Steady...Draw", says the machine, and on that you have to press the right hand flipper button as fast as you can. Beat the Bad Guy and you get a random bonus - loose and you don't. Dramatic Stuff. Although it's not the best table in the Universe - you have to study the playfield carefully to work out all the bonuses - it's not the worst either, so give it a try if you have some spare change and a yearning for something different.



zoom about all over the place, but if you are still unsatisfied with the experience after the 10p has gone, try and find a Thundercross and see for yourself if that's any better.

FAXBOX
Graphics 7 Sound 6 Gameplay 7 Addictivenes 6
Not crap - but there are better game around of a similar type
OVERALL 6



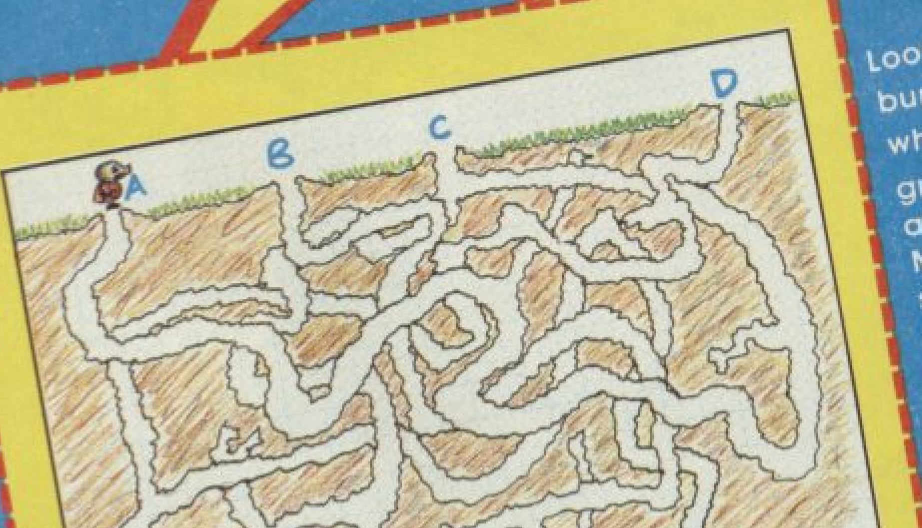
WIN A..



Look who's burrowed a whumping great tunnel into the Sinclair User garden and left little hills all over the place - it's hunky, chunky, funky Monty Mole. We just love him to bits in the SU office, part super-hero, part sex god (are you sure? - Jim) part draylon sofa, who could resist him? Certainly not us.

Monty Mole is now appearing in Impossamole which is the latest in the Monty Mole series of games from those lovely chaps at Gremlin. To celebrate the launch of Impossamole into the Speccy market Gremlin have given us such a ruddy brilliant compo prize, you just won't believe it. Not only have they chucked 20 Moley T-shirts over our garden fence, they've buried a brand spanking new Personal CD Player in our herbaceous border (don't worry we'll stick it under the tape to wash all the mud off before we send it to the winner).

Your rather 'tricky' task is to help Moley weedle his way around the underground maze beneath our garden and find the CD player. When you think you've got the right tunnel, fill out the competition coupon and send it to 'Moley, Moley in a big Holey', SU, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Entries in by 30th May 1990.



Moley found the CD player in tunnel

A ____ B ____ C ____ D ____

Name ____

Age ____

Address: ____



ESCAPE
FROM THE PLANET OF THE
ROBOT MONSTERS
---HAS BEEN TAKEN OVER BY THE EVIL REPTILONS!
ESCAPE – FROM THE WORLD OF BORING VIDEO GAMES!
Yes! This is the latest, wackiest, most playable shoot-em-up for a very, very long time.
"Lots of beautiful girls have been abducted to Planet X by the evil reptilons. And when I say abducted, I mean.... well, yes – exactly! It's a disgrace! And those evil reptilons are downright.... evil! And that's not all – there's more. Where? Inside of course! Good luck men!"
Bzzz. 'crackle'. hizz. pop: This is Radio S.M.O.G. bringing you the latest update.
"We join our heroes on the surface of Planet X where a rescue mission is in progress. The REPTILONS have enslaved the humans stationed there. They are being forced to create an evil Robot Army destined to DESTROY THE EARTH! Listen out for our next broadcast"
THEY ARE BEING FORCED TO CREATE AN EVIL ROBOT ARMY DESTINED TO DESTROY EARTH!
"THE FATE OF THE WORLD IS IN YOUR HANDS!"
JAKE
"DESTROY THE EVIL REPTILONS"
DUKE
TENGEN
The Name in Coin-Op Conversions
DOMARK
Available on: Atari ST, Amiga, IBM PC 3.5" & 5.25", Commodore 64 (cassette, disk) Amstrad (cassette, disk) Spectrum +3, Spectrum 48/128
Programmed by: Teque Software developments Ltd. © 1990 TENGEN INC. All Rights Reserved. ™Atari Games Corporation
Published by Domark Ltd, Ferry House, 51-57 Lacy Road, London SW15 1PR Tel: 01-780 2224 Atari ST & Amiga Screenshots



Ocean Software Limited · 6 Central Street · Manchester · M2 5NS · Telephone: 061 832 6633 · Telex: 669977 OCEANS G · Fax: 061 834 0650

3D PINBALL



Who's idea was this? Talk about setting yourself difficult targets. 3D graphics are pretty tough to program, and the inertia effect of gravity on rolling balls is such a complicated mathematic formula it's almost impossible to get right. Since no-one (to my knowledge) has actually perfected either, it seems a bit ambitious to try and incorporate both in one program.

Nevertheless, 3D Pinball comes about as close as any I've seen.

The aim, of course, is to simply keep your ball on the table as long as possible, collecting the available bonuses.

Since there's only one table (unlike some other pinball outings) and bearing in mind that there isn't even a second playfield, the onus is very much put upon the playability to bail out 3D Pinball on the interest front.

Unfortunately, while the ball travels quite convincingly in the lower (nearest) area of the table, it behaves most strangely up the other end. It's as if there are magnets at the top end of the table and the ball continually slows down and speeds up as it's pulled this way and that. Don't get me wrong. We're not talking impossible irrationality here, but it doesn't feel right.

There are nine bonus tricks to perform, ranging from simple bumpers through tricky tombstone knock-downs to ultra-impossible round-the-hairpin shots.

The action's fast and you can perform all the experts' pinball tactics, like trapping the ball in the crook of your flipper, letting it roll gradually towards the end and - at the right point - whacking it, thus attaining more accuracy.

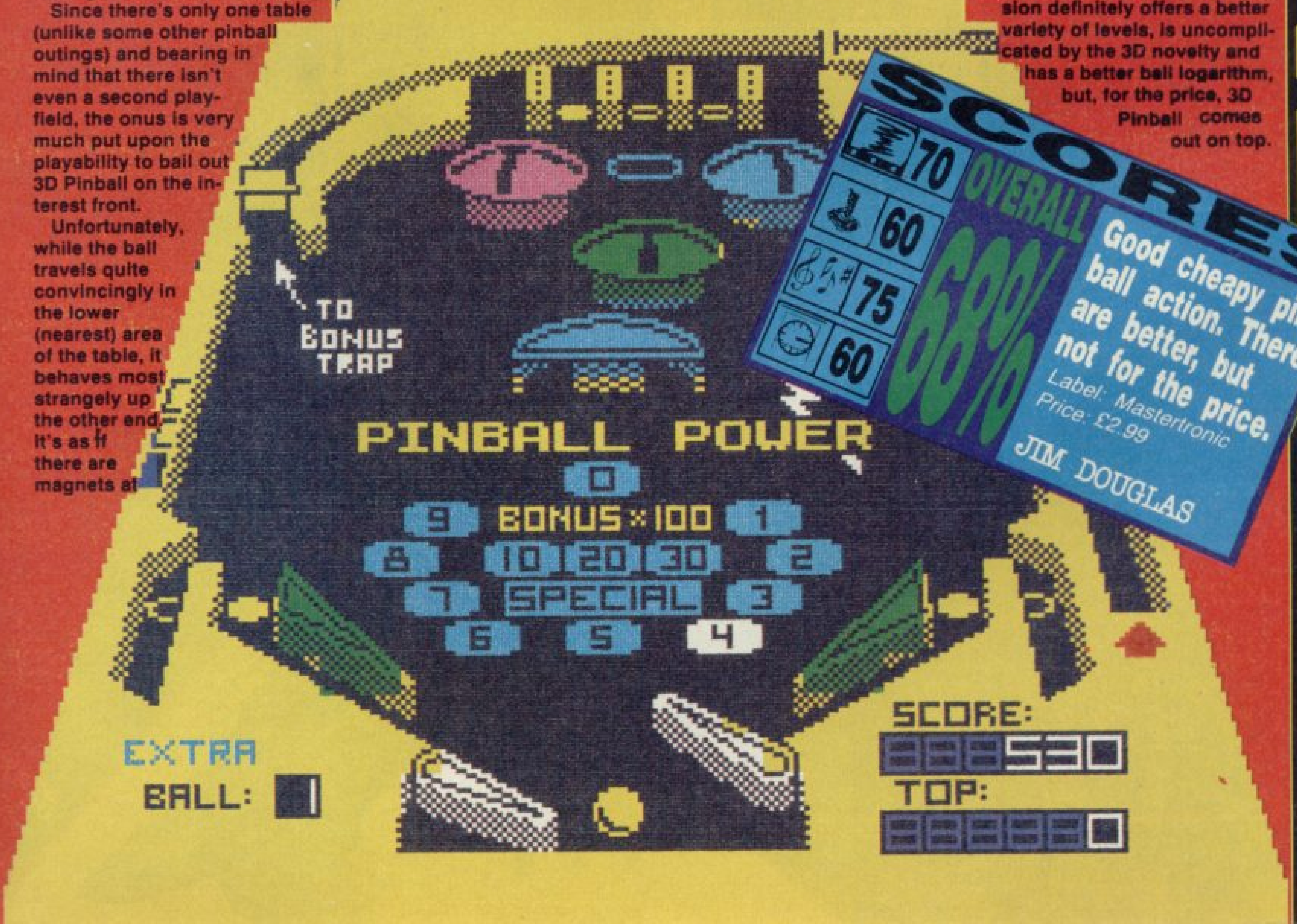
Until you've mastered such tricks, you can forget any ideas about intentionally collecting any bonuses, since the perspective on the ball at the nearest point on the table makes it hard to time your flips.

Each time you operate a flipper, the bonus indicator wheel (centre, front) clicks round to the next position. This is the time to get your ball into the bonus trap, where your rewards fluctuate from paltry to extremely generous.

The biggest problem with 3D Pinball is that, despite quite an impressive number of bonus features, the single table won't hold your interest for too long.

Timescanner, from Activision definitely offers a better variety of levels, is uncomplicated by the 3D novelty and has a better ball logarithm, but, for the price, 3D Pinball comes out on top.





SCORES

Graphics	70
Playability	60
Sound	75
Lastability	60

OVERALL 68%

Good cheapy pinball action. There are better, but not for the price.

Label: Mastertronic
Price: £2.99

JIM DOUGLAS

PSYCHO HOPPER





And you thought you'd seen it all, eh? Armed with a huge space hopper filled with deadly gas and a blunderbus, you must bounce around the World of Dreams collecting flashing gems. Sounds simple? And it IS! Well, it would be if the World of Dreams hadn't been built out of steps.

The main challenge of Psycho hopper is simply working your way around the infuriatingly constructed world. Since it takes about four consecutive bounces to reach maximim hop height, and you can't bounce on the spot, you spend most of your allotted time trying to get over relatively simple obstacles. It only takes a couple of steps and a low ceiling to completely halt your progress.

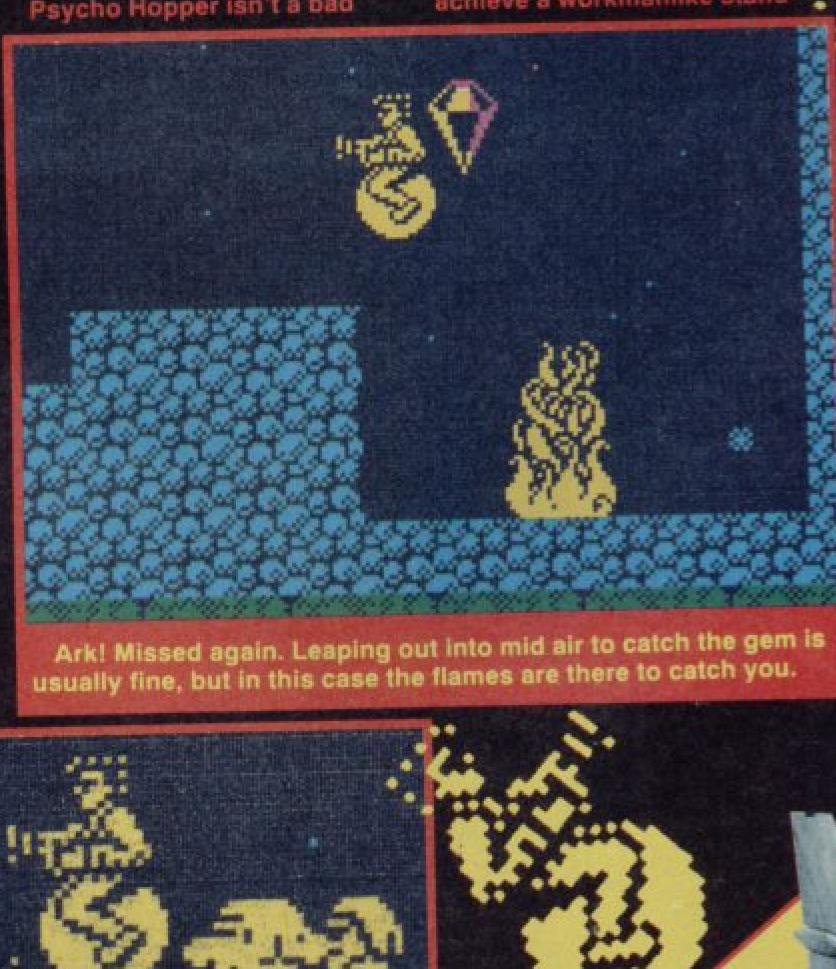
These problems are compounded by the swarms of other creatures who home in on you and don't have any problems getting through the toughest of obstacles.

Thankfully, you are endowed with an unlimited supply of bullets and you can turn and fire in mid air.

Psycho Hopper isn't a bad looking game. It's colourful, with minimal attribute problems and a good turn of speed, even through cluttered screens.

Each stage has its own selection of weird (dreamlike, even) enemies. By far the most deadly are the swarms of bats which flap about and drift doggedly toward you. If you find yourself surrounded by incoming squeakers, you've got to carefully prioritise between bouncing on the spot, clearing the way ahead (thus running the risk of running out of time) or try to press ahead, gaining time but incurring horrific hit points.

The further you manage to fight your way into the game, the more inaccessable the gems become Even after constant play, I could only achieve a workmanlike stand-



Ark! Missed again. Leaping out into mid air to catch the gem is usually fine, but in this case the flames are there to catch you.

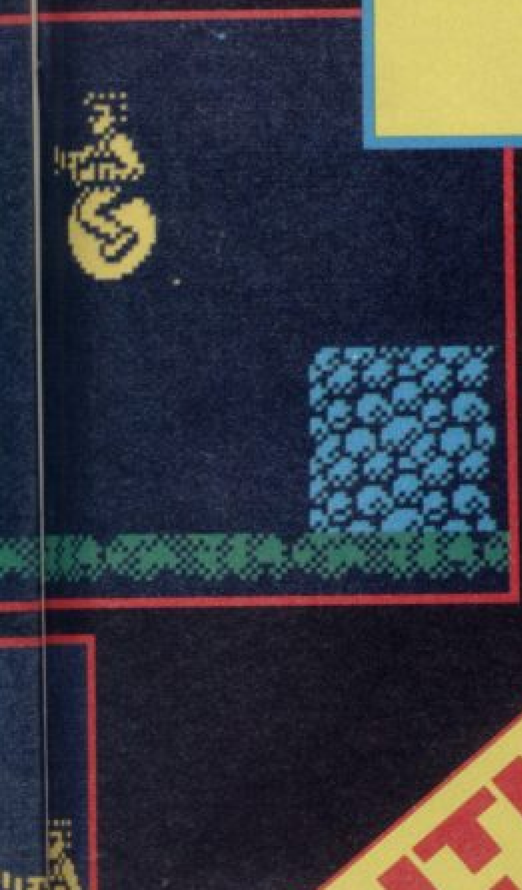






Skimm...
craft a...

…PER



SCORES

OVERALL 69%

ard of control, bouncing around largely out of control, stuck in awkward angles of steps, having my energy drained by horrible dwarves tumbling through the roof.

You'll need more patience than me to get the most from Psycho Hopper.





Push forward on the joystick and watch your aircraft scream up the screen into oncoming missiles

FIGHTING F16 FALCON



…imming low over the Sahara, the skies filled with enemy aircraft and …-splintering action.

I do love a game with completely illogical controls. Look, I know that Falcon Patrol doesn't bill itself as a realistic simulation. I realise that it's supposed to be a knockabout bit of blasting fun, but I don't think it's especially unreasonable to expect the controls to be the right way round.

When you fly a plane, pulling back on the joystick pulls the nose up (you go up). Pushing forward on the joystick tips the nose forward (you go down). And the same is true of a thousands of coin-ops and conversions the world over. Alas, F16 doesn't follow such dreary conventions. Your plane behaves as if it was an airborne cursor. Pulling back on the joystick to climb sends you earthward, while pushing forward to dip your nose out of trouble causes you to climb into oncoming bullets.

You can't even remedy the situation yourself since there's no option to redefine the keys.

Although billed heavily as being compatible with the Magnum Lightphaser, the extent of Lightgun control is minimal. You shoot your plane and the computer picks a safe direction and automatically moves you that way.

So apart from the fact that it's completely unplayable, what's it like? Crap, I'm afraid.

Remember Afterburner? Well, take out all the good bits and F16 is what you've got. Each of the four (count 'em!) stages takes place in a distinct global environment. There's the blistering heat of the Sahara desert, the close humidity of the tropics, the icy wastes of the Arctic and finally the, er, damp wetness of the Ocean.

Unfortunately, it doesn't really matter where you're fighting, since the baddies you face (enemy jets and choppers) are common to all levels.

Did I mention that it was extremely easy? Oh. It's appallingly easy. You can get through the levels simply by letting go of the joystick and firing occasionally.

If you're bonkers about flying then maybe you could just about justify the three quid. Other than that. You'd just have to be bonkers.

SCORES

Graphics	55
Sound	60
Playability	35
Lastability	30

OVERALL 40%

Reasonable pix, but really not much gameplay to speak of.

Label: Mastertronic Price: £2.99

JIM DOUGLAS



SF BOOKS COMPO RESULT

We had loads of entries for March's SF Books compo, and the ten lucky winners will receive their prizes direct from publishers Paper Tiger, (who we dopily called Dragon's Dream in the compo).

Simon Davies, Pembrey; Alan Clark, Fleetwood; J Cawley, St Annes; S Tinney, Alperton; Paul Fulford, Reading; John Ireland, Purley; Gavin Cavendish, Leicester; Kevin Jones, Leeds; Leigh Loveday, Port Talbot; Jay Mann, Borehamwood.

TekWar

Old corsets himself, William "Captain Kirk" Shatner, has launched his first sci-fi novel, TekWar. It's a racy, pacy, spacey tale of a futuristic detective doing battle with drug dealers, corrupt cops and millionaires in 22nd Century LA. It's a large-format paperback and costs a stonking £6.99 from Bantam Books.

Fortress of the Pearl

Michael Moorcock's first Elric novel for ten years sees the white-faced swordsman seeking the powerful Pearl at the Heart of the World. Moorcock's gone a bit significant these days, so you can bet this will be more than an ordinary sword-and-sorcery adventure; but all the usual ghoulies are there, along with characters with names like Chamog Borm and a face like a squished tomato. An even more stonking £7.99 from Grafton Books.

DOC SAVAGE OMNIBUS 11

If you haven't caught up with the adventures of the greatest pulp magazine hero of the 30's and 40's, now is the time. Doc Savage, raised from birth to right wrongs and fight evil-doers, travels the world with his five amazing companions and has a jolly good time. The original pulp novels are now being reprinted five to a volume, and Omnibus 11 features Se-Pah-Poo, Colors for Murder, Three Times a Corpse, Death is a Round Black Spot and The Devil is Jones. £3.95 from Bantam Books.



Black Adder

At last! The first and best series of The Black Adder on video! You remember - this was the best sitcom ever set in 1380, where rubber-faced Rowan Atkinson plays snivelling Edmund Blackadder, known to historians as the scummiest toe-rag in the great laundry basket of British history. And it was much funnier than the later series, because Ben Elton didn't write it, hooray! There are two tapes so far, each with three episodes including classics like The Queen of Spain's Beard and The Witchsmeller Pursuivant. All your faves appear including Tony Robinson as the malodorous Baldric, Tim McInnerney as gormless Percy and Rik Mayall as mad Gerald! £9.99 each from all good vid shops.

LOOK OUT - IT'S THE MEGAFORCE!

Forget Action Man, this lot would have him for dinner and spit out the pips. MegaForce is a new series of toys from Kenner, including a huge range of futuristic attack heli-copters, VTOL aircraft, missile car-riers, tanks and command vehicles, all with moving parts and authentic military markings. There are two sides in the MegaForce conflict, Triax and V-Rocs, and it's impossible to say which has the more frightening fighting vehicles. Prices range from £3.99 to £14.95 and they're in the shops NOW!





BAT-HYPE CONTINUES!

You've seen the film, bought the T-Shirt and wrapped the dish-cloth around the cat, now you can play the cardgame (ordinary playing cards with pics of Battie, Joker and the gang on the picture cards, £3.99) and zoom around the floor with a teeny little Batmobile, Batwing and Joker Van from ERTL (£3.95 to you guv). But the great news is that Bat-man, the motion picture that gave a whole new meaning to the phrase "That was a bit disappointing" is com-ing out on video on April 6th! The bad news is that it costs £60, so it's rental only, boys and girl.





YUPPIE PHONE HOME

Next time you see some horrid yuppie taking out his portable phone to call his stockbroker, whip out your Piano Phone and say "Aha! But does yours do THIS?!" then play "Mary Had a Little Lamb" on the key-board. Then taunt him further by tell-ing him that yours comes in a range of eye-catching colours, only costs £1 from tat shops everywhere, and it's probably more reliable than his too. (PS it doesn't actually make phonecalls though, kids.)



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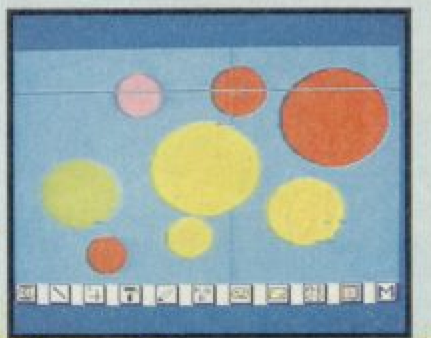
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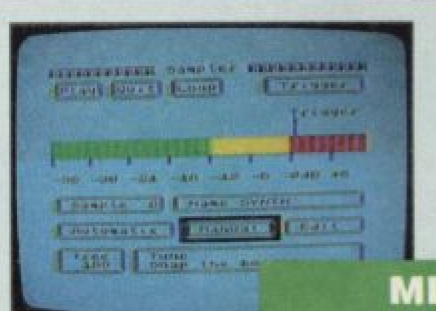
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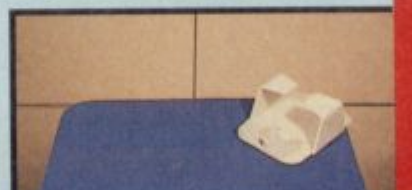
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- Mouse operation, plus joystick and keyboard control.
- 16 pens, 8 sprays, 16 brushes - so flexible anyone can create superb graphics easily.
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- The Genius Mouse system even comes with a built-in joystick interface - so there's no need to unplug it when you want to play games.
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- Works on IN31 (Kempston) system.



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WITH CUSTOM MOUSE IC

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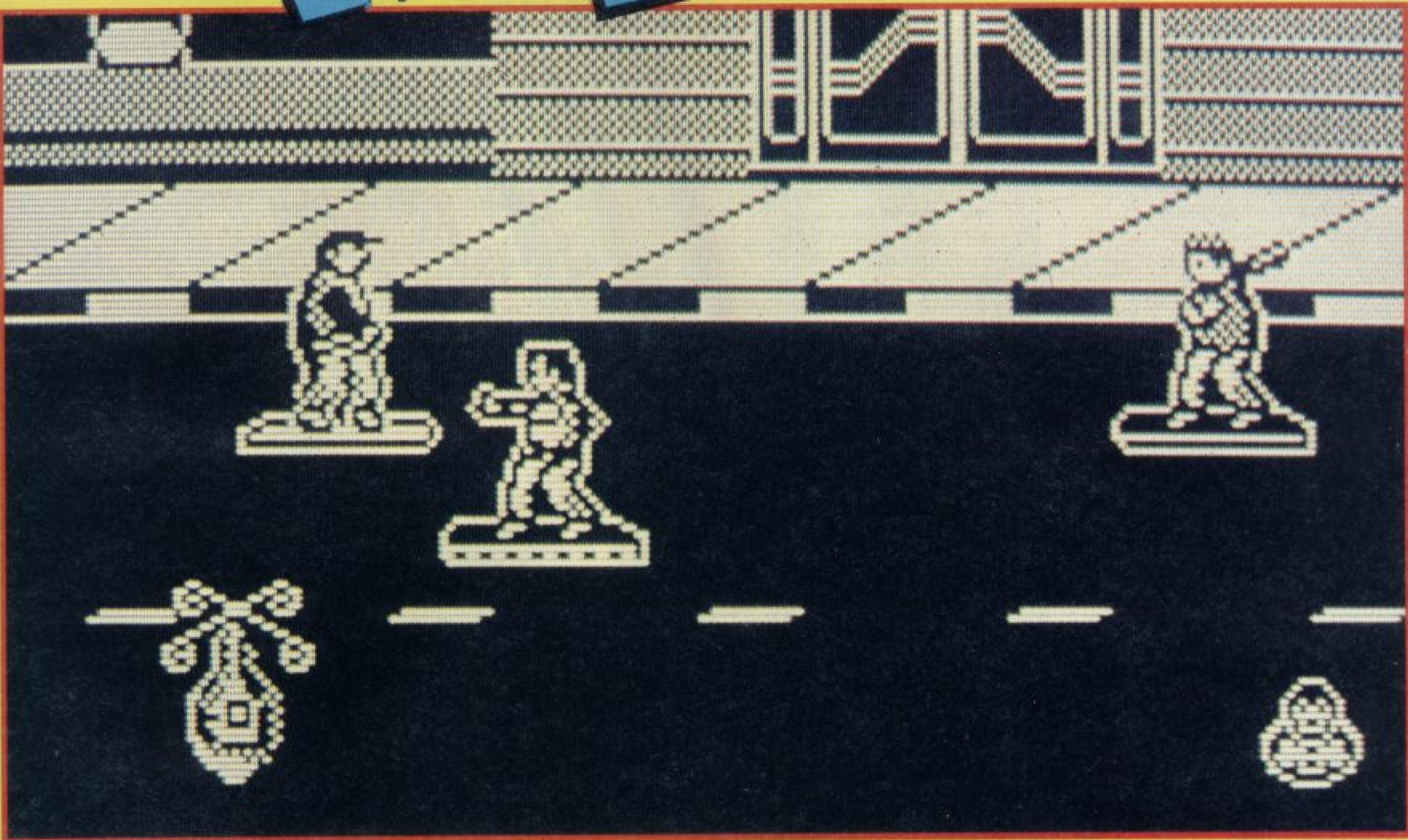
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PREVIEWS



BACK TO THE FUTURE II



Phew! Time travel, eh? A right loopy business. In case you didn't manage to get to the movies to see the film, I'll try and outline the (thoroughly barmy) plot for you.

Marty and the Doc are in 2015, thanks to their powder-powered Delorean sportster. Marty discovers an almanac of 20th Century sporting results and desides that if he takes it back in time, he'll be able to place lots of sure-fire bets and accumulate a big pot of wonga.

Even after the Doc persuading Marty against such a brilliant and profitable idea, time itself stands a good chance of being thoroughly screwed-up by Biff who has stolen the book with the same idea.

And so, as Mr Mc Fly, your main aim, in the Image Works game of the sequel of the film, is to put a stop to Biff's evil time-twisting antics.

The game looks like being an absolute blinder, and should be out in June.

Streetdate: June Price: £ 8.95

Pipe Mania!!

This is one of THOSE games. You know - the ones that look awful, like 1979 vintage ZX81 efforts, but as soon as you start playing them, you turn into a dribbling, play-obsessed zombie. One of those games which should have a warning about rocketing electricity bills printed on the cover. One of those games which, in short, are madly addictive, despite not being based on an Arnold Schwarzenegger film.

So what's it all about then, you ask suspiciously, not expecting the answer "laying pipes". Actually it's about laying pipes. No, never madam! But yes, the big challenge is to lay as many connected-up pipes as you can before the time limit runs out, the water comes splashing through and you get your shoes wet.

This is how it goes. The screen is laid out as a grid of squares, and each square can contain a section of pipe. You control a cursor, and must move it to whichever square you want before laying the next section. The catch is that there are many different shapes of pipe available - straights, left-hand bends, right-hand bends, crossovers - and you have to take what you're given from the bottom of the column on the left. If you manage to lay out a sensible pipeline, when the water starts flowing from the main tank you carry on scoring points; if the water flows out of an unconnected end, you get damp and your turn ends.



And the scores on the doors today, Norris. Brian is the clear leader with a massive Million points!



The whole idea might sound a bit wet, tee-hee, but as the action gets faster and more frantic you'll find yourself refusing to switch off. If you put a bit of pipe in the wrong place you can "bomb" it out on your next go, but this loses you time and points. On later levels your pipeline is interrupted by wrenches, but you also get reservoirs which will delay the flow of the water.

There's also a bonus level interrupting the main game; this is a bit like Tetris, as bits of pipe fall from the top of the screen, and you have to move them left or right before they drop into place. You can't though, turn them around, as you can with the differently-shaped blocks in tetris, so if anything this is even more of a challenge. A counter at the side of the screen shows you how many pieces of pipe are remaining.

Animation, such as it is, is decent, screen colours are minimal and sound is too. Still, the fab news is that this attention-catching game is likely to be appearing on a coin-op near you in due course; nice to see the games industry creating ideas rather than pinching them from the coin-ops. So get your wrench out of your trouser pocket and get pipe-laying as soon as poss.



Oh yes! Well ahead of the flow of water on this early level, you've got to maximise your skills quickly.

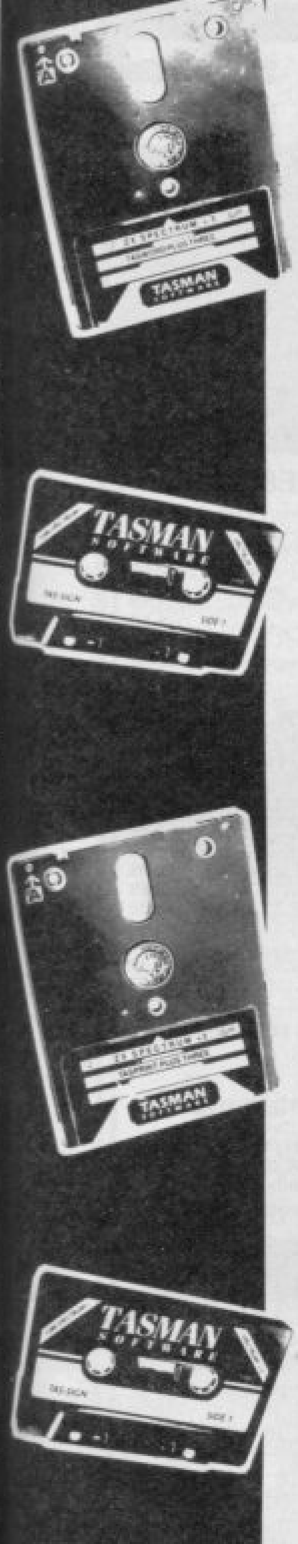
SCORES

45
60
89
91

OVERALL 88%

Amazingly addictive pipe laying fun. Not much to look at, but great to play.

CHRIS JENKINS



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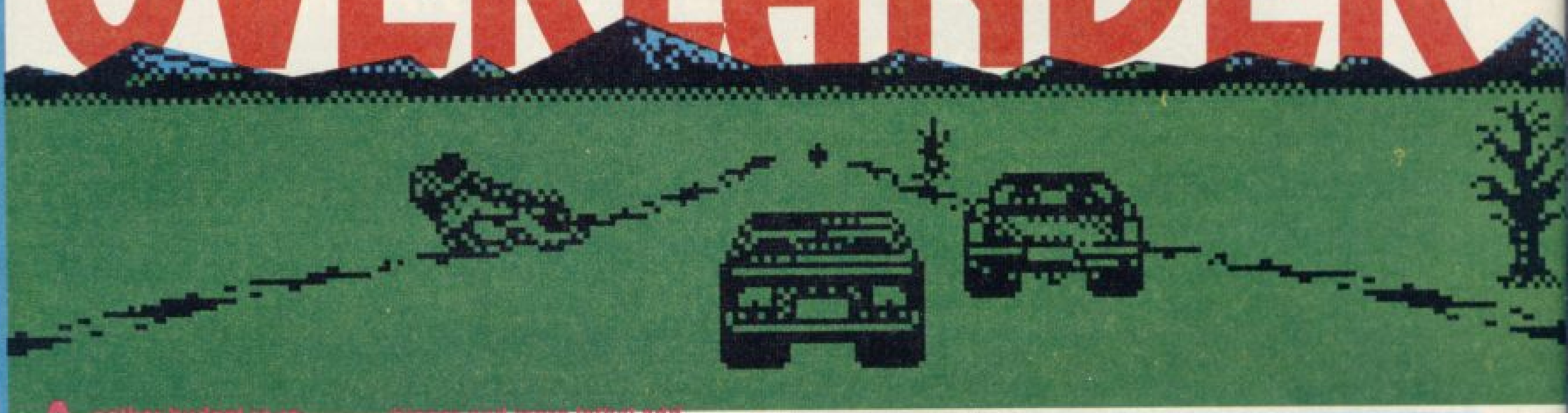
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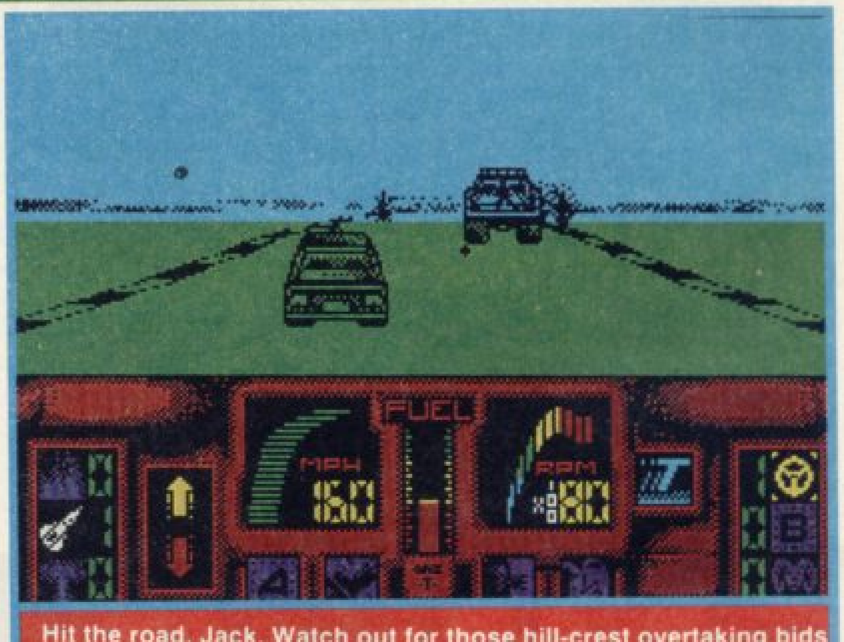
OVERLANDER



Another budget re-release, and this time one which is actually worth the dosh. When Overlander first appeared its great boast was that the background actually goes up and down as well as left-to-right; this isn't so amazing now, but it does add an extra element of interest to what is basically another cross-county race game, but with GUNS, oh yuss!

Extra oomph is added by the fact that Overlander takes place in a post-holocaust America where ruthless, excitement-loving adventurers (a bit like me - JD) carry cargoes, legal or illegal, across the radioactive wastelands between underground cities. You can earn more dosh for taking illegal cargoes, but all you money goes on buying bigger and more lethal add-ons for your car (a bit like me again - JD). You get to tool up before each journey, using a multiple-choice menu, and naturally you have to choose carefully between weapons, fuel and more powerful motors - it doesn't do to run out of juice in the radlands, but you wouldn't want to be without a flamethrower at the appropriate moment either.

The actual race sections are great, though each stage goes on a bit too long for my liking. The road dips and waves realistically, scrolling is smooth and your car twists and turns in response to your joystick movements. At the bottom of the screen, various displays show your fuel count, speed, weapons status, and proximity of enemies.



Hit the road, Jack. Watch out for those hill-crest overtaking bids They always end in tears.



Which of these dodgy cargos will you transport for the stubby-fingered men in shiny suits?

Your opponents include maniac motorcyclists, bomb-slinging trucks, armoured cars and roadside gun-emplacements; most of these you can take out with your standard gun, or missiles, but some demand smart bombs, wheelblades or the battering ram. Either way, you get a satisfying explosion and a big points bonus for doing the business.

If you're a fan of dangerous driving and anti-social behaviour (a bit like me - JD) you shouldn't miss out on Overlander - at a budget price, even if you already have something similar like Turbo Outrun or Buggy Boy, it's worth the petrol money.





SCORES

Graphics	78
Playability	60
Sound	85
Lastability	89

OVERALL 86%

Big fun race shoot explode crash bang whizz skid pop blast jobbie.

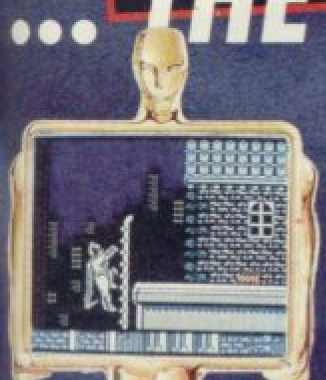
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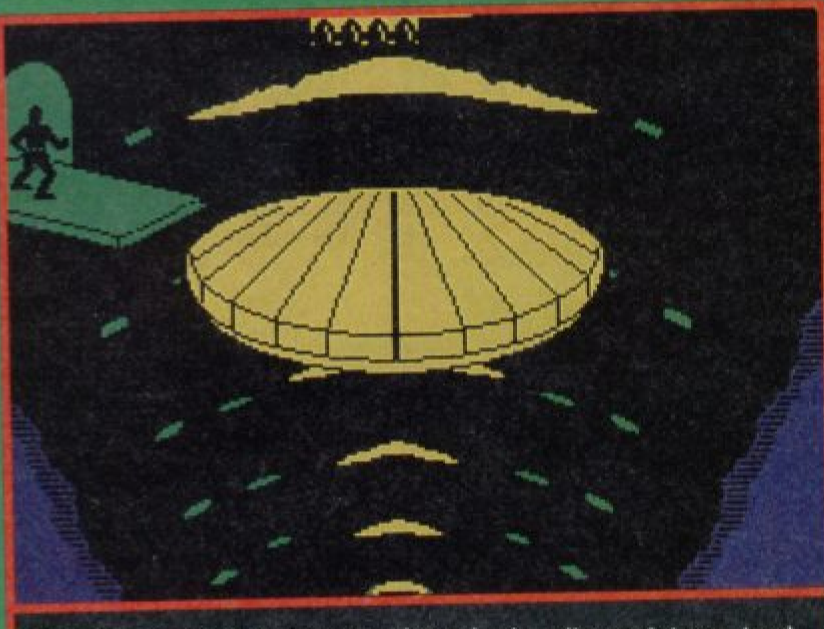
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DRAGON'S LAIR



Dragon's Lair was a biggie amongst biggies when it first appeared at full price - but why? True, it was based on a phenomenally successful arcade coin-op, featuring laser-disc cartoon-style Don Bluth graphics. But you don't actually get those on the Spectrum, do you? No, you just get the usual selection of colours and the usual semi-jerky sprites. You don't get the marvellous multi-voice synthy music either - just the Spectrum's bleepy intro theme, and a few zips and zaps in the game itself. So what do you get? A series of nine very straightforward but irritatingly difficult arcade games interrupted by tedious loading sequences, that's what you get.

The plot - rescue maiden from clutches of evil dragon Singe and pinch his treasure - doesn't bear discussing, so let's plunge straight into the action, big joke, because the first section sees you leaping onto a plummeting platform. If you survive the leap you have to fight against the foul breath of demons who try to blow you off the platform - slip off the edge and you plunge to your doom, and get to see the sequence where you disintegrate to a skeleton then reform for another go, which rapidly gets tedious, as you can imagine.

In later stages you have to negotiate corridors with sword-wielding hands, thread your way through mazes full of deadly skeletons, swing on burning ropes, slice slippery tentacles and finally fight the dragon itself. You have different controls in different sections, but basically each routine is a matter of learning to make the correct joystick movements in the right order - it's more like being a laboratory rat than playing a game, if you ask me.

I always thought that the arcade game was a complete rip-off - after all, once you've learned the correct movements, you could play the game all the way through in two minutes, but it would have cost you hundreds of pounds to get to that stage.

which would be better off given to charity.

At least with the budget version of Dragon's Lair you won't waste more than £2.99, but if you ask me it's £2.99



SCORES

[graphics]	60
[playability]	45
[sound]	56
[lastability]	57

OVERALL 59%

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VIKINGS



Around the time when old Harold was getting one in the eye at Hastings, the Vikings were holding a little sideshow up North. Lots of men with big red beards and names like Thorvin Skullsplitter had popped over for a weekend of rape, pillage, murder and more rape, and Stamford Bridge was the most popular spot for it. They had such a good time that thirty years later they were back for a reunion at Menai Straits, and now you can join in the fun at both events with Challenge Software's strategic simulation, Vikings.

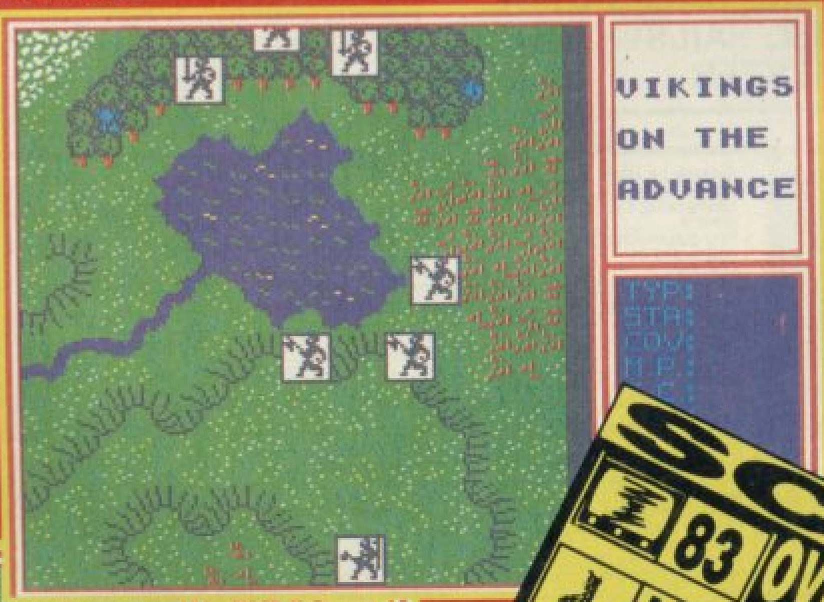
This isn't the kind of game which is going to appeal to arcade enthusiasts; it's a realistic and complex simulation which seem to rely heavily on a good deal of historical research. For instance, did you know that mediaeval battles rarely had heavy casualties, because once one side saw it was losing, they usually ran away? Well, Vikings simulates this historical fact among others, though you can pursue a fleeing army and hack them to bits with your cavalry.

The on-screen graphics are nicely colourful and well laid-out; the backgrounds for the two battles include grass, bridges, roads, woods, walls, undergrowth, buildings, rivers and beaches. Several different types of forces including irregulars, cavalry, infantry and bowmen are represented by different icons, and using the SCAN option from the on-screen menu you can call up a display of the makeup, strength, organisation, morale, experience and armament of each unit.

As you would expect, options for each turn include moving, (joystick or keyboard controlled) firing, choosing to stand your ground and ending to let the Vikings take their turn. Unfortunately the game doesn't have a two-player option, or allow you to take the side of the Vikings.

In order to win you must have three times as many surviving units as the enemy, and you can save and reload games at any stage. What's really missing is any sense of close combat; there's no "arcade sequence" (I know purists hate this sort of thing anyway) and the computer works out all the casualties in each conflict. Sound is absolutely minimal - just the odd beep to let you know that a command has been executed, but what more do you need.

The brief instruction booklet contains a good deal of background information on the Vikings, Anglo-Saxons and Anglo-Normans, so at the very least Vikings proves to be an educational bit of entertainment.





SCORES

Graphics	83
Joystick	NA
Sound	83
Value	85

OVERALL 83%

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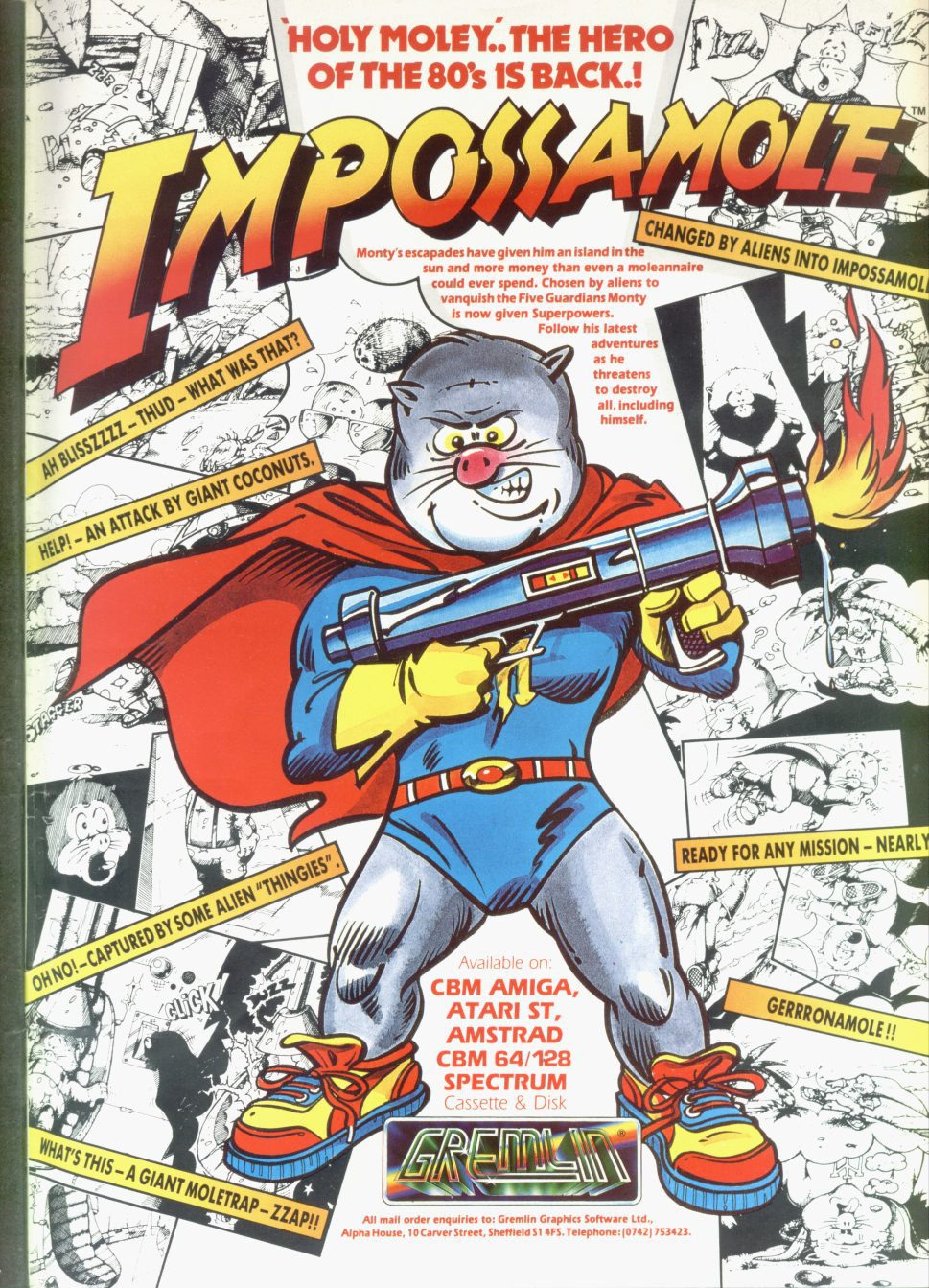
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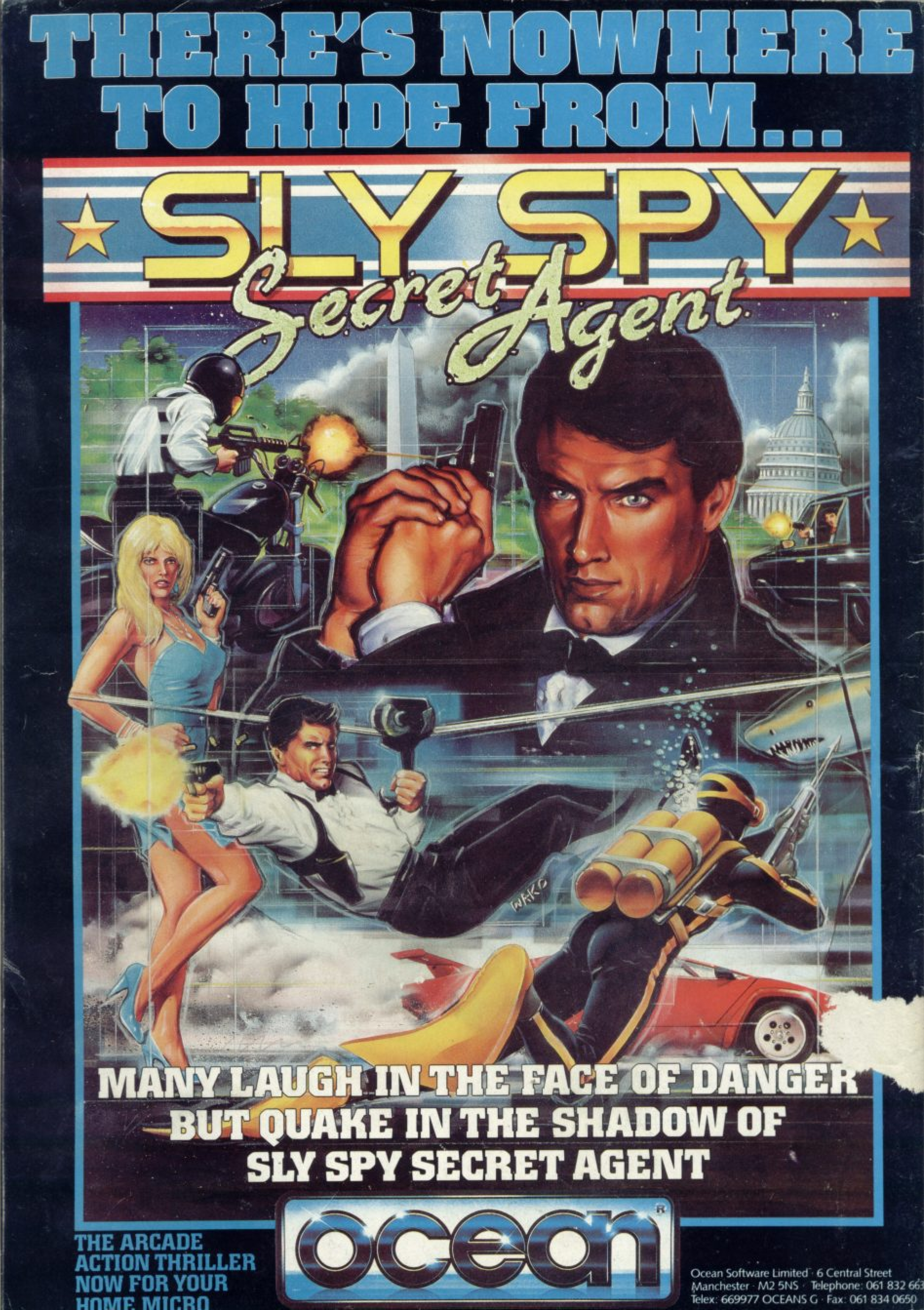
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